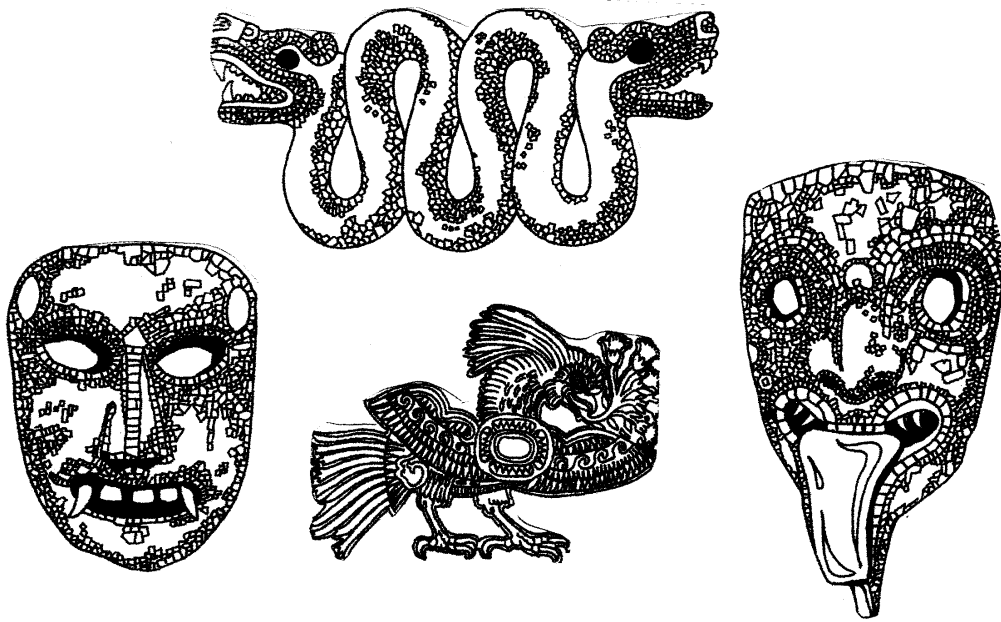


**Anthropology of Magic,
Witchcraft & Religion
Anthropology 107
Notes, Assignments and Articles Packet**



**Fall 2009
Professor K. Markley**

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Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events by E. Evans-Pritchard

Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande by E. Evans-Pritchard

Witches and Neighbors: Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft by Robin Briggs

The Goat and the Gazelle by Tanya Luhrmann

Paganism- from the Pagan Educational Network

Día De Los Muertos

Digging the Days of the Dead (Chapter from the book) by Juanita GarciaGodoy

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INFORMATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER:

Notes and Assignments Packet: This packet contains; lecture notes, exam study guides, and assignments. Bring this Notes Packet to class every day.

SYLLABUS & CLASS SCHEDULE:

Read the syllabus! The syllabus gives you the information you need to be successful in the class. If you have a question, more often than not your syllabus will contain the answer. The class schedule has three columns; the date, readings and topics, and assignments due. Refer to your class schedule EVERY week to keep up to date on reading assignments and homework assignments. The dates for when your assignments are due is **listed in your class schedule** but may also **be announced in class** (any changes will be announced in class- make sure that you either attend class every day or get notes from a fellow student).

Attendance: Success in this class (success= passing this class with a C or better) will require that you attend class regularly. It is not uncommon to miss one class at some point during the semester, either due to an illness or some other serious problem. **If you miss class it is your responsibility to get the information that you missed. I do not give out notes from a missed lecture.** I advise you to get to know a couple of other students in the class and exchange email or phone numbers (if you feel comfortable doing this) so that you can find out what you missed if you are absent. It can be helpful to connect with a fellow student in class who is reliable note taker. If you still have questions about the material covered while you were absent (and you have already gotten notes from another student) feel free to make an appt. during my office hours.

Read your textbook, articles and class notes before class lecture. Check your class schedule for the topics/readings for the day's lecture. It is a good idea to first skim over the material to get an idea as to what the reading is about, where it is going and what you should look for. Then read the material before class lecture. Familiarize yourself with the terminology used. Make sure that you have a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words (words are often in the back of the text).

Class lecture & Note taking: Use this notes packet and be an active note taker during lectures. Overheads are used to highlight important concepts and are useful for test reviews.

- One of my old professors gave students the following recommendations to do well in college classes; read your text at least 3 times (first just read it, then underline/highlight key points, lastly take notes on key parts and terms), read class notes at least 3 times (similar strategy as above), then write up your notes and review them at least 6 times.
- When I was in school I always made 3 x 5 cards for important concepts and terms. I found this very helpful in learning the material.

ASK QUESTIONS, if you are in doubt or unsure about something ask!

Learning is an ACTIVE endeavor. At the college level if you are passively listening or passively reading/memorizing classroom material you will not gain the type of understanding that is needed to be successful. To be successful you will need to know the definitions for concepts and terms but this is only the start. To do well on exams you will need to be able to recognize and apply what you are learning. If you can explain what you are learning to someone else that is generally a good test as to how well you know the material. Make sure you can put concepts into your own words (although make sure the words mean the same thing!). Ultimately to be successful you will need to be engaged in class lecture, discussion, and outside studying and assignments. Being an active learner includes; raising your hand and asking questions, making observations and comments on the material presented.

How to figure out your grade

It is important for you to keep track of your grades over the semester. This allows you to monitor how well you are doing in the class. I will pass back all of your assignments and exams so that you can keep track of how you are doing. To calculate your grade you will need to determine how many points you have earned in relationship to how many points are possible.

Sample: If you want to figure out your grade after the first exam you can see from the grading page in your syllabus that the maximum points you can have earned is 120 points

| Maximum Points Possible | Points that you earned |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Exam 1 - 100 pts. | 72 pts |
| Quiz 1 - 10 pts. | 6 pts |
| Quiz 2 - 10 pts. | 9 pts |
| <hr/> | |
| 120 pts. possible | 84 points earned |

Take the 84 points you have earned and divide it into the 120 points that were possible and you will get .70 this means that you are getting a C at this point (70% = C, 80%= B, etc.). Although if you have read your syllabus you will see that you get to drop one quiz so if you do well on your future quizzes you will likely want to drop quiz 1.

Your syllabus contains a list of all the assignments and the points they are worth. I advise you to keep a list of the scores on each assignment in your syllabus. I also recommend that you keep all of your graded assignments until you receive your grade at the end of the semester.

Introduction to the Anthropological Study of Religion and the Supernatural

This semester we will engage in the anthropological study of religion and the supernatural. To be engaged and successful in this class you will need to have an open, questioning mind and work to be culturally relative. Ivan Karp, an anthropologist, states that “The anthropological lens teaches us to question what we assume to be unquestionable.” Over the course of this semester it is likely that this class will challenge your ideas as to what religion is, and what questions are appropriate to explore in regards to religion. Read through what Claude Levi-Strauss has to say in regards to the anthropological study of religion.

According to Claude Levi-Strauss the anthropological study of the supernatural is “*good to think*” because it involves asking and answering questions that get to the heart of who and what we are as individuals and as a species. As we engage in our journey into the anthropology of religion keep in mind some of the following points Levi-Strauss makes in regards to the anthropological study of the supernatural:

The Anthropological Study of the Supernatural involves the study of “other” people’s beliefs and practices along with working to objectify “our” beliefs and practices. It is often much easier to talk about those “other” beliefs than to look at “our” own beliefs. Levi-Strauss frames the anthropological study of the supernatural and gives some cautions.

- There is a fine line between exoticizing, idealizing, and simplifying other people’s beliefs, actions, and rituals. We want to avoid simplistic, idealistic views of other’s beliefs. While we may find other religions exotic, the goal is not to emphasize the exotic nature of other’s beliefs but to understand them.
- All of the knowledge we gain of religions must always be looked at in relationship to the context within which the beliefs developed and are practiced. The context includes; political, economic, material, and historical issues.
- All religious practices are embedded in social systems (the context). Religions and social systems are embedded in; historical struggles, modes of production particularly in respect to colonialism, capitalism, and the emergent globalization of today’s world.
- The best anthropology is self-critical. Self-Critical in regards to who is given voice and who has the power of voice. Who is the authority in regards to a religion, a culture, a supernatural belief system...the studied or those that conduct the studies?
- **The “ultimate truth”** is outside the realm of anthropology. Anthropologist’s do not work to determine what is truth in regards to a religion and/or the supernatural (although we may work to evaluate claims of proof for the supernatural)

Questions in regards to the study of supernatural and religious beliefs are central to anthropology. These questions involve looking at some of the hardest and most enduring questions about who and what we are as a species. This includes questions of and in regards to: difference, rationality, community, symbolization, meaning, relativism, power, hierarchy, harmony, conflict, alienation, love, well-being, reproduction, fertility, death, suffering, and redemption...

Welcome to the class and I hope you enjoy our journey....

Key Anthropological Terms and Concepts

Anthropology is the holistic study of humankind. Anthropology is unique among the disciplines that study humans in that it encompasses everything involved with humans and human institutions in its study of humankind. Areas that anthropologists study include; biology, evolution, culture, history, cross-cultural comparisons, linguistics, politics, economics, religion, history, pre-history, philosophy, etc. Anthropologists in the United States utilize the four-field approach to gain insights and understandings of humankind. The four-fields of anthropology are;

Biological or Physical Anthropology: the study of humans as biological organisms. Includes the study of the evolution of humans, human variation, and primatology.

Cultural Anthropology: study of human cultures around human institutions around the world. The anthropology of religion is a subfield of cultural anthropology.

Linguistic Anthropology: includes the study of language and culture, the evolution of language, and the history of language.

Archeology: involves the study of human remains and human artifacts to understand human pre-history.

Holism is the key to the anthropological approach. To be “wholistic,” is to look at everything involved in the topic of study. Of course it is impossible to include everything in the study of a topic but anthropologists use various approaches and theories to be as comprehensive and systematic as possible. The study of religion or the supernatural is a topic of study in all four fields of anthropology. Holism requires a systematic analysis of comparative data. Anthropologists analyze humans at various levels from the micro (individual and small group) to the macro (institutional levels).

The Comparative Approach is key in anthropological studies. The comparative approach involves contrasting and comparing different cultures. To look at the similarities and differences in cultures over time and space. The comparative approach ultimately allows us to gain insight into human universals (things all human cultures do or have, i.e. belief systems) and cultural specifics (the specific forms that different peoples beliefs take)

Ethnocentrism is the understanding that all humans view world through their own cultural lens (like tunnel vision) and then tend to judge other cultures from their narrow cultural perspective. Humans in all cultures tend to see their culture as the best, the most normal and “natural.” Other cultures are seen as “less good”, “less normal” and “less natural.” Ethnocentrism operates at both the conscious and unconscious levels.

Cultural Relativism is a perspective adopted by anthropologists in the early 1900's as an "antidote" to ethnocentrism. It is important to work to be culturally relative while we study other cultures beliefs and practices. A culturally relative stance holds that all cultures are equally valid expressions of the human essence. So to understand what it is to be human, all cultures are valid sources of study. Cultural relativism requires that we try to understand other cultures by working to view them through their own "cultural lens." It requires that we work to get the emic perspective and gain insight into the history of the cultures we are studying. Cultural relativism is an essential stance when learning about other cultures but it is not moral relativism (which states that all cultures must be held as equally good).

Culture is one of the key concepts in anthropology. Anthropologists have spent a fair amount of time working to come up with a definition of culture that satisfies all of the aspects of human cultures around the world. There is no universally agreed upon definition of culture but most anthropologists would agree that a definition of culture would include the following:

Culture is learned. You do not inherit your culture. You learn it in the culture that you are raised in.

Culture is shared. Culture requires a community of people

Culture is symbolic. When you are a part of a culture you learn the meaning or various meanings of the symbols in that culture. Depending on what culture you are raised in certain symbols will be significant to you or insignificant to you.

Culture is adaptive. In that your culture tells you the acceptable way to live and survive. The culture that we are raised in informs us what animals and plants are food sources, what type of shelters to live in, and what clothing is appropriate to wear. The political and economic systems of a society are also a part of the culture that people live in.

Culture is integrated. All of the different systems and institutions in the culture operate together, such as the economic and political system along with the predominant belief systems. No aspect of culture is isolated and each part affects the other parts. A change in one area of a culture often affects other areas of the culture (a change in the economic system can affect religious values and expressions.)

Emic / Etic: Anthropologists gather data through **participant-observation**, which involves living and working among the people that are being studied. Anthropologists use open ended questions and observation to gain qualitative data about the cultures they are studying. This is in contrast to psychologists and sociologists which tend to use questionnaires, and surveys as well as controlled experiments in their study of humans and societies. One goal of anthropological fieldwork is to gain the emic (insider) perspective of the people being studied. The emic perspective is to gain “uncritical representations of reality shared by members of a given culture.” Once data has been gathered an **ethnography** is written which involves putting forth the emic perspective and then conducting an etic (outsider) analysis. Etic perspectives include “comprehensive, explanatory representations of reality recognized by the scientific community.”

Ideal/Real: A key goal of ethnographic fieldwork is to get beyond what “people say they do” (ideal) to “what people actually do” (real). Participant-observation is a great way to go from the ideal to the real.

Explicit/ Tacit: It is important to realize that humans have explicit (clearly developed and formulated, conscious knowledge) understandings of the world they live in and tacit (unexpressed, unsaid, often unconscious) understandings.

Language: One issue that we will deal with over the semester is the difficulty in defining certain terms, terms that are used by different people in different times with different meanings. For instance what is a witch? How has the meaning of the word “witch” changed over time and space? How is the meaning of the word witch different in different places around the world? Does the word witch have different meanings within our culture? How and why have the meanings changed?

This semester I will give you operational definitions for some terms and for other terms we will not develop absolute definitions. It will be helpful to keep in mind that the “appropriateness” of language changes over time. Many of the articles you will read were written a number of years ago when different linguistic standards prevailed. Much of the terminology used in the articles is no longer considered appropriate today (i.e. using “savage” or “primitive” to describe traditional/ non-industrialized peoples). As you read your articles try not to let the terminology become an impediment to your learning.

The Anthropology of Religion, and the discipline of Anthropology, started in the Intellectual climate of the Enlightenment. In the West, during this time, many of the previously held understandings and assumptions about humans and the world were being explored and questioned. In the 15th century European explorers began the **Age of Exploration** as they traveled looking for wealth in new lands. These explorers sent back vivid descriptions of the exotic peoples and cultures they encountered on their journeys in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Often these explorers did not respect or know the languages of the peoples with whom they came in contact. They tended to make brief, unsystematic, and highly prejudiced observations.

The Age of Enlightenment in Europe (17th and 18th centuries) was marked by the rise of scientific and rational philosophical thought. Enlightenment thinkers, such as Scottish-born David Hume, John Locke of England, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau of France, wrote a number of humanistic works on the nature of humankind. They based their work on philosophical reason rather than religious authority. Rousseau, for instance, thought that society (its social institutions, art, science, etc.) corrupted humans. Humans living in nature were morally superior to humans living in cities, immersed in society. Rousseau's ideas foreshadow later simplistic views of people's in traditional cultures as "noble savages." A key critique of Rousseau is that he, like most other writers of the Enlightenment era, lacked firsthand experience with non-Western cultures

A key concept held in common by philosophers and intellectuals of this period was their **abiding faith in the power of human reason**. Thinkers of the day were enormously impressed by Isaac Newton's discovery of universal gravitation. If humanity could unlock the laws of the universe, God's own laws, why could it not also discover the laws underlying all of nature and society? It was now assumed that through a judicious use of reason, an unending progress would be possible—progress in knowledge, in technical achievement, and even in moral values. Through proper education, humanity itself could be altered, its nature changed for the better. A great premium was placed on the discovery of truth through the observation of nature, rather than through the study of authoritative sources, such as Aristotle or the Bible

The Renaissance was a series of literary and cultural movements in the 14th-16th centuries. One of the key thoughts of this era was the concept of **humanism**, which emphasizes the worth of the individual. Renaissance humanists believed it was possible to improve human society through classical education. The word renaissance means "rebirth."

The Rise of Science during the Enlightenment Era played a big role in the development of anthropology. E.B. Tylor was an early anthropologist who thought that science was the best means by which to explore the nature of humans. The debate over how to study humans, and the role that science plays in this study is still going on today. Can we study humans in the same way that we study the rest of the world and life on earth? What questions can we ask and answer? Humans are very complex and a number of scientists would state that there are too many variables to account for in developing absolute cause and effect explanations for human behaviors and beliefs. Others state that we can work effectively to account for the different variables.

History and Context of Anthropological Studies

Anthropology as a discipline started off with the study of “far off, exotic peoples” who live in **traditional cultures** (see below). It was considered a rite of passage for an anthropologist to engage in participant-observation of a traditional culture for at least a year or two. Over time the focus of anthropology has expanded to the study of modern, industrial and post-industrial cultures. Anthropologists realize that to engage in the study of “humans” they need to study humans in all societies.

Traditional Cultures: In this class we will use the term traditional culture to describe cultures that subsist by foraging and hunting for food or with horticulture (planting of small, multi-crop gardens, without irrigation, without chemical fertilizers, slash and burn technology). Traditional cultures include the following features; everyone is involved in the collection and production of food, no one has a full-time specialized role, individuals may be informal leaders or shamans (religious specialists who are also healers and diviners) but they are still involved in food collection, there are no profound differences in standards of living (fairly egalitarian), they are nomadic or semi-nomadic, and they exchange goods and services through reciprocity, they have limited technology but extensive knowledge of the environment.

With **Agriculture** profound changes occur in societies. Agriculture includes the following features: for the first time there is permanent use of the land and property ownership is an issue, labor is very intensive, agriculturalists work much harder and produce more food than horticulturalists, excess food is produced and for the first time in human history not all individuals within the community are engaged in the collection or production of food, people live in large, permanent settlements (cities and states). There are formal political leaders whose standard of living is better than the rest of the population. **A two class system develops.** There is an elite class who specialize in specific tasks and there are now full-time political leaders, religious leaders, soldiers (with standing armies) and full-time artisans. **Societies are now stratified by power, wealth, and prestige.**

The SELF and OTHER Dynamic

The earliest anthropologists were Western European, upper class, White, males who went to “far off” places like New Guinea, Africa, India, China, South America, etc. Generally they studied the peoples that their nation had colonized. The people that they studied were physically and culturally very different from them. Utilizing the comparative approach these early anthropologists compared and contrasted these peoples with themselves and their cultures. This led to a dynamic in anthropology in which the people under study were gradually formulated as the “other.” These process wasn’t necessarily explicit, and it developed over a period of time. These “other” people were typecast as being very different from the anthropologists doing the fieldwork. These “other” peoples were generally stereotyped as being less rational, less normal, as primitive and often as less intellectually capable. Some of the early anthropologists were ethnocentric, often to the point of racism.

There were, however, a number of anthropologists who saw these “other” peoples as just as rational, reasonable and intelligent as they were. Bronislaw Malinowski, Evans Pritchard, Franz Boas and Mary Douglas were anthropologists who questioned the ethnocentric judgments of their day. Today most anthropologists are more aware of their own ethnocentrism and we are trained to be objective in our research. Today anthropologists specialize in studying modern day cultures as well as traditional cultures.

Noble and Ignoble Savages or Others: It is not uncommon to have traditional people's typecast as either *Noble or Ignoble Savages*. In both cases these *other* peoples are portrayed as very different from us (whoever Us may be comprised of). As Noble Savages traditional peoples are viewed as wise, peaceful, spiritual, mystical guardians of the land who exists in harmony with nature. As Ignoble Savages they are viewed as wild, vicious, violent, irrational, ignorant beings. Key to these changeable views is the context within which they are formulated and propagated, contexts such as colonialism, enslavement and genocide.

Nature/Nurture Debate

The nature/nurture debate is big in anthropology (also in psychology, sociology and philosophy). It is a debate that has gone on for thousands of years and will likely never be completely resolved. Those that advocate the "nature" position maintain that for the most part human behaviors stem from our genetic make-up (see natural selection, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology in the theory section). Those that advocate the "nurture" position maintain that for the most part human behaviors stem from the environment or culture that we are raised in (see historical particularism, cultural materialism, symbolic anthropology).

There are numerous books that reflect on and debate the role of nature and nurture in regards to the origin and development of religious beliefs. Questions asked include; Are supernatural beliefs an aspect of human nature? Are supernatural beliefs and aspect of human societies? Are supernatural beliefs a result of the development of our large brains? Did religious beliefs and practices aid in our early psychological and/or physical survival?

Human Evolution, Natural Selection and the Origin of Religious Beliefs:

In recent years a number of anthropologists and other social scientists have postulated that a propensity for beliefs in the supernatural is a byproduct of human evolution. Evolutionary theory, specifically natural selection, states that a **physical trait** which increases the differential reproductive success of an individual will be selected for. Over time this trait will increase in numbers in a population of organisms, traits such as coloring, speed, size, etc. (read about natural selection in these notes). Evolutionary explanations for supernatural beliefs state that certain physical and/or **emotional traits** (e.g. the ability to enter a trance state and susceptibility to healing while in this state) conferred on the believers the ability to survive longer and therefore to reproduce more offspring.

James McClennon- How Religion Began: Human Evolution and the Origin of Religion

McClennon utilizes a ***ritual healing theory*** to explain the origin of religion. He states that individuals who were predisposed to hypnotic suggestion were selected for in our evolutionary past. When people became ill and the shaman worked to cure them, those that were more susceptible to trance and suggestion were more likely to live. These more susceptible individuals lived longer, had more offspring and passed on this trait in greater numbers. He postulates that the first religions arose out of early shamanic healing activities as rituals developed in conjunction with the healing activities.

Anthropological Theory

Natural Selection: Darwin developed the Theory of Natural Selection to account for the physical changes he observed in organisms over time (comparing fossils with living creatures), and to explain the differences and similarities he observed in animals in different environments around the world (i.e. white & brown bears). Natural selection is the foundation of biology as a discipline. There is no debate in science today as to the validity of natural selection (the only debates are within theology, to do with either literal or figurative interpretations of scripture and Genesis).

Natural selection states the following:

- there is **variation** in individuals within species-individuals vary in size, color, speed, etc.
- there is always **competition** between individuals within populations- competition over access to scarce resources, competition over evasion of predators.
- Individuals who have the best traits for the environment, are the most fit. **Fitness** in natural selection is defined as “**differential reproductive success**” – individuals who produce the most offspring within the population are the most fit
- Fit individuals pass on their traits to offspring- **inheritance**
- **Over time populations change** as the individuals who have the best traits for reproductive success in a particular environment have more offspring and the population changes to reflect the inheritance of the positive traits.
- However, **environments change** over time so the traits that are the “best” will change over time and place. Natural selection does not lead to more perfect organisms, it only works to keep a species in an adaptive relationship with its environment.

Sociobiology (generally associated with non-human primates) & Evolutionary Psychology (sociobiology applied to humans): Sociobiology takes natural selection one step further. It states that “nature” not only selects physical traits which increase fitness but nature selects for **behaviors** that increase fitness. So, behaviors which increase an individual’s “fitness” (reproductive success) will be selected for. Reproductive fitness involves different strategies and behaviors for females and males, because females and males engage in different behaviors to reproduce, and so they have different “**reproductive strategies**.”

- **Male reproductive strategies:** For males to pass their genes onto the next generation, they (theoretically) just have to impregnate a female. Sociobiology states that the most effective behaviors for males is to; 1) out-compete other males for access to females, 2) impregnate as many females as possible (to be “undiscriminating maters”).
- **Female reproductive strategies:** For females to pass their genes onto the next generation they need to engage in different reproductive strategies. Females need to; 1) get pregnant, 2) carry the offspring to term, 3) nurse the offspring, and 4) raise the offspring till they are able to survive on their own. Females must invest a lot of time and energy to reproduce offspring. Females best reproductive strategy is to distance themselves from other females and to select males that will stick by them and help them care for their offspring.

***** Make sure you understand the key differences between natural selection (accepted as the explanatory law in biology) and sociobiology which is quite controversial.**

Social Evolutionary Theory: This theory was influential in the mid 1800's. Utilizing the comparative approach anthropologists worked to put cultures into different categories. Social evolutionary theorists labeled cultures as being in the savage stage, the barbarian stage or as having attained the level of civilization. Of course these early theorists saw their culture as being the best, and the most advanced, they were *civilized*. They saw other cultures as being stuck in savagery or barbarism. These are the key aspects of social evolutionary theory:

1. All societies **progress** through the stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. Societies progress at different speeds (some cultures get stuck in savagery for a period of time while others attain civilization).
2. Societies are classified into each stage by their level of technology, subsistence means, belief system, mating rules, descent system, economic system, political system, etc

The three basic stages that societies go through are:

- **Savagery-** gathering and hunting for food, mating is promiscuous, the basic unit of society is a small, nomadic "horde", possessions are owned communally, basic, limited technology is used (bows and arrows, digging sticks), descent is reckoned through females, animistic belief systems.
- **Barbarism-** pottery is invented, farming/horticulture has begun, incest prohibitions are introduced (incest prohibitions include all clan members), the development of metallurgy, descent reckoned through male line, polygynist marriages, concept of private property appears, polytheistic belief systems
- **civilization-** intensive agriculture, the invention of writing, formation of state governments, monogamous family formation, monotheistic belief system

Social Evolutionary Theory has been abandoned in anthropology as being ethnocentric, racist and inaccurate.

Social Evolutionary Theories: Keep in mind the following key concepts

- **Progress concept:** within social evolutionary theory the progress concept sees humans as **rational** beings who use reason to progressively "improve" themselves, and their institutions over time. A key problem is how to explain why some societies are "stuck" in the savage or barbarian stage and others have "progressed" to the civilized stage.
- Some social evolutionary theorists believe that all humans share a **psychic unity**. **Psychic unity** includes the belief that all humans have the same basic cognitive abilities and psychological make up.
- Some social evolutionary theorists believe that humans around the world have different intellectual capabilities (some groups are more intelligent than others). Levy-Bruhl stated that people in traditional cultures have a "**pre-logical**" **mentality**. He stated they are incapable of reasoning in the same way that people in civilized cultures are, he stated that they have a "**primitive mind**."

*** It is important to note that Social Evolutionary Theories have been refuted and are now seen as racist and ethnocentric by most all anthropologists and social scientists.

Historical Particularism: Franz Boas originated this perspective. He felt that the social evolutionary perspective was ethnocentric and biased. Historical Particularism states that to understand a culture you must gain insight into the history and material conditions under which a culture developed, anthropologists must do fieldwork to gain this information. Anthropologists must work to be culturally relative and gain emic perspectives. Boas also stated that you can only draw conclusions in regards to the particular culture that you are studying. Boas was very critical of ethnographers who generalized about multiple cultures using data collected from one particular culture. For instance, say an anthropologist, after studying shamanic practices in one traditional culture wrote a paper claiming that shamanism typically functioned the same way in **all** traditional cultures. Boas would consider this inappropriate **generalization** because ethnographic field work can only reveal information about the particular culture being studied.

Functionalism: There are various types of functionalist theory but in general functionalism works to explain the “function” of the customs and institutions that are **universal** in human societies. The idea is that if an institution like marriage exists in all human groups then it must perform some critical function for humans (or else why would it exist in all cultures?). Functionalists tend to explain beliefs or institutions as functioning to aid individuals at the **psychological level** or to aid social groups at the **social level**.

For instance the institution of marriage “functions” to serve the individual (to help fulfill individuals biological and psychological welfare) and it also “functions” to serve the society (to help keep the society running smoothly, to minimize conflicts). Freud put forth a functionalist perspective to explain the existence of religious beliefs. Freud’s view was that religious beliefs were sort of a pacifier for humans. Humans believed in a god, envisioned as a father figure, because this gives them comfort in the face of life’s trials and tribulations.

Postmodernism: Postmodernism is a perspective that arose in many areas besides anthropology (mostly across the social sciences). Postmodernism is a reaction to earlier positivist perspectives which state that humans can be objective observers and there is an objective reality to be discerned. Postmodernists state no one can be an objective observer and there is no, one, objective reality to be found. In anthropology postmodernism grew out of insights from feminist and ethnic minority anthropologists who were highly critical of many of the ethnographies that they read about different cultural groups. They saw these ethnographies as one-dimensional perspectives of the cultures being presented. Most of the early anthropological fieldwork (like research in other fields) was done by white, upper socioeconomic class, western, males. Postmodernists noted that the researchers were influenced by their status in their own culture and their key informants were often males of a similar status (they didn’t get information from females or those who were of lower status). Early ethnographies were seen as one-dimensional perspectives of the cultures being studied. Postmodernists worked to “deconstruct” existing literature, ideas and ethnographies. Postmodernists see societies as being engaged in a constant battle over opposing interpretations, interpretations that vary based on a persons gender, class, and ethnicity. Issues such as who has power and voice in a culture (who has a voice in society) are critical to postmodern scholars. Postmodernism states that we cannot accurately describe any culture completely because we will always be limited by our subjective perspectives and the perspectives of the informants that we use. They assert that there is always variation in representations of “reality” based on a person’s status. Postmodernists state that there is no one way of presenting history, that a variety of historical interpretations are valid, depending on your position and your perspective

Supernatural Beliefs and Functionalism. Below are three major ways in which supernatural beliefs are analyzed in relationship to functionalism.

1. Gives Order and Meaning to the World: All belief systems give their believers a worldview which includes assumptions and explanations in regards to the world and life's events. Humans are creatures who want to know how and why things happen. Supernatural beliefs can answer our questions about the world; how did it come to be, why are we here, why do things happen in the way that they do. Creation myths or stories are an example of how supernatural beliefs give us order and meaning. All cultures have myths which explain how they came to be in this world, why they are here, and the nature of humans. Even with an acceptance of science there are questions that can't be answered by science, such as why we live and die, or why we die at a particular time. This aspect of supernatural beliefs functions to help individuals psychologically and to aid societies function.

2. Reduces Anxiety and Increase a Sense of Control: Humans recognize that there are many things we cannot control and we know that bad things can happen and often do happen. Humans do not operate very well when they are anxious or feel out of control. All belief systems give their believers some means by which to connect with and contact their supernatural beings or forces. Prayer, and sacrifice are both common methods used to connect with the supernatural, to ask for assistance, and to relieve stress. The belief that a divine being will intervene in our affairs can be comforting.

3. Maintains Social Order: All belief systems have some sort of ethical code, some beliefs in regards to what is considered right and what is considered wrong. Religious beliefs aid in the proper functioning of society by give an ethical code for behavior and for having a means of punishing individuals for violating ethical codes. Most belief systems have some sort of provision for the supernatural punishment of people after they have died (which theoretically acts as a deterrent).

Anthropological Theory: Should the study of Humans be Scientific or Humanistic?

This is an ongoing debate in the anthropology. Some anthropologists, Marvin Harris for example, believe that if we engage in a scientific, systematic study of human cultures we can gain insights into human beliefs and behaviors. Harris thinks that should be our goal as social scientists, to understand human behaviors so that we can work to improve our culture. Other anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz believe that humans are too complicated to be studied scientifically. They think it is too difficult to come up with any definitive cause and effect understandings of human behaviors. They believe the goal of anthropologists should be to work at getting at the meaning and experience of being a human being in different cultures.

Cultural Materialism: Formulated by Marvin Harris. Harris stated that humans can and should be studied scientifically (etic perspective). He states that human beliefs and practices can be explained by looking at the material (environmental and historical) conditions under which beliefs and practices arose. The environment constrains and shapes the ways humans work to fulfill basic needs. All customs and beliefs, no matter how exotic, can be explained rationally by looking at the material conditions under which they arose. Harris states that the emic perspective is not very helpful in gaining insights into human beliefs and behaviors because he sees most humans everyday consciousness as being filled with "ignorance, fear and conflict." He does not see most humans as being capable of discerning why they believe and act the way in which they do.

Cultural Materialism: Scientific approach, Etic perspective

- Goal is to discern cause and effect explanations for humans beliefs and practices.
- Human beliefs and behaviors have developed from a material history and if we look at the history and material conditions under which cultures have developed we can explain what may appear to be irrational beliefs and behaviors but which in fact have a rational basis.

A Cultural Materialist model of culture includes three levels. All 3 levels are inter-related and connected, a change in one area, affects the other areas:

1. The base or bottom level: The **Material foundation** includes; the economic mode of production (how the people work to survive, foraging/hunting, horticulture, agriculture, etc), technology (what types of technology the group has), and the population size

2. The middle level: The system of **Social Organization**. The Social Organization level includes; kinship patterns (matrilineal, patrilineal, bilateral), marriage and family practices (extended families, nuclear families), politics (the political system, including whether or not the culture is egalitarian or stratified), status differentiation (hierarchy), economic system (reciprocity, market economy, etc)

3. The top level: The **Ideology or Belief System**. The top level includes; ideas, beliefs (both secular and sacred), and values of the group.

The Cultural Materialist model is helpful in giving a basis to systematically look at cultures. Using the three level approach it is easier to see how the differences in cultures at the material level translate to differences in the middle level (social organization) and the top level (ideology). For instance we will not find full-time priests in cultures that are foraging and hunting for food.

Symbolic Anthropologists: Symbolic anthropologists are fundamentally concerned with the ways in which people formulate their reality. The goal for symbolic anthropologists is to gain insight into the meanings relevant to the members of a culture. Symbolic anthropologists utilize a humanistic approach to gaining insights into human beings and cultures. They study peoples symbols, their literature, and their games. The emic perspective is highly valued in symbolic and humanistic anthropology. What people say about their cultural values and norms is considered very important.

Symbolic Anthropology: Humanistic and Emic perspective

- Goal is cultural interpretation, look to the symbols, literature, and games of a culture to gain insight into the meanings and behaviors in a culture

What does it mean to be a human in a particular culture, get at the “*essence of being human*”

Early Theories of Religion

E.B. Tylor (1832-1917) was a British anthropologist who put forth an early attempt at a scientific analysis of religious and supernatural beliefs and practices. In 1871 Tylor wrote "Primitive Culture." Tylor started with the assumption that religious beliefs and practices stem from humans **rational** attempts to understand, explain and control the world around them. Tylor had two basic cultural laws that he formulated.

1. The principle of **psychic unity** or uniformity within the human race. He noted the similarities of beliefs and practices over the world (they may appear different but at their core he saw them as basically the same). He believed there was a fundamental unity to all humankind in their intellectual abilities.

2. The improvement of intellect over time, the **progress concept**. This law follows the first. If there are differences in the ways that people believe and act it is because they are at different stages of development. Some cultures and peoples are not as advanced as others (advancement often being calculated in a very ethnocentric fashion) because they had not progressed yet. All cultures would ultimately end up at the same level of development. Tylor believed strongly in "the ascent of man" and that the story of civilization is one, long tale of **progress**. He saw three basic stages to humans supernatural/religious beliefs.

- **Animism** was the first stage of religious beliefs that humans had per Tylor. Animism is the belief that all life forms (humans, animals, etc.) and natural phenomena (rocks, rivers, trees, etc.) possess a soul or consciousness. The soul or life force is the cause of life and thought in the individual or thing it animates. It is believed that the soul/life force can leave the body and wander around. Animistic beliefs came about as humans tried to **rationally explain** their experiences with sickness and death. Tylor saw peoples experiences with dreams, hallucinations, and death as leading to an animistic worldview.
- **Polytheism** was the second stage. A belief in many gods or spirits. These gods tend to have personal identities, and often represent aspects of nature (i.e. rain god, mountain goddess). Tylor polytheism starting as people stopped hunting and gathering for their survival and transitioned to horticulture and agriculture.
- **Monotheism** was the final stage, a belief in one supreme deity. Judeo-Christian beliefs were seen as epitomizing this, most advanced stage.

James George Frazer (1854-1941) "*For him, religion was to be always an interest but never a creed*" Frazer also proposed a **social evolutionary** scheme for religious beliefs. Like Tylor he saw religious beliefs arising from people's **rational** attempts to make sense of their world. In 1890 Frazer wrote **The Golden Bough** and he chronicled the **progressive** stages that he saw in human societies around the world. All cultures initially started in the Savage Stage then passed through the Barbaric Stage, and ultimately a culture became Civilized. Frazer saw some cultures as being stuck in the savage or barbaric stages but ultimately reason would be used to move forward to civilization (read about Social Evolutionary Theory in the section on Anthropological Theory).

Per Frazer there are three stages that occur in human societies as humans rationally and progressively work to understand their world. Beliefs and practices arose as individuals worked to understand and try to control the world around them to aid in their survival.

Stage 1- Magic. Magic is defined as the use of mechanistic and/or ritualistic means to bring about a desired result but without a proven cause and effect relationship. According to Frazer, magical beliefs rest on a mistaken understanding of cause and effect relationships. Frazer emphasized the use of **sympathetic magic** by earlier humans. He speculated that early humans saw nature as working by sympathies or influences. For instance, if you drink the blood of an ox, you gain the physical strength of an ox. There are two aspects to sympathetic magic per Frazer.

- **Imitative magic:** Like affects like. If you sprinkle water during a ceremony you will be able to bring on a downpour.
- **Contagious magic:** Part affects part. If you make a doll with the hair of your enemy then you can harm your enemy by harming the doll.

Stage 2- Religion. Per Frazer Religion gradually replaces magic as people begin to create gods and goddesses and see them as being responsible for events in this world. A belief in gods and goddesses develops as a way for people to explain why magic doesn't always work. Gods and Goddesses can be capricious and may not always grant people's desires. People develop mythologies, engage in sacrifice and ritual to appeal to their gods and goddesses.

Stage 3- Science. Science replaces religion as humans begin to understand cause and effect relationships and as they no longer need magic or religion for physical and psychological survival. Science gives accurate understandings in regards to cause and effect relationships. Science can explain why a garden doesn't grow (poor soil or insect infestation) and can be used to bring about the desired effects.

Emotionalist theories of religion: Emotionalist theories see religious beliefs as arising more in relationship to people's emotions as opposed to beliefs arising out of rational means of understanding and controlling the world. Emotionalist theories of religion include the Awe and Confidence theories listed below.

Awe theories: these explanations for religious beliefs state that supernatural beliefs came from the awe that humans feel as they experience cosmic forces around them. Religious feelings started with intense feelings of grandeur that came out of their experiences with nature- lighting and thunder, the stars, the moon, the sun, huge waterfalls, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Humans did not understand how natural phenomena operated and they infused their attempts to understand with reference to supernatural spirits, beings, gods, goddesses.

Confidence theories: these explanations for religious beliefs state that humans were conscious of their vulnerability, and weakness in relationship to the natural world and also in relationship to illness, misfortune, and death. Religious beliefs and practices arose as a means to deal with these fears. Rituals were developed to connect with the supernatural (prayer, sacrifice) and beliefs arose to deal with humans fears (afterlife doctrines).

Sociological Theories of Religion: these theories focus on the social functions of belief systems, looking at the ways in which religious beliefs fulfill societal needs. So, religious beliefs and practices arise out of social needs and efforts. (As opposed to Tylor and Frazer who saw individuals, using reason as developing the first religious and supernatural beliefs).

Emile Durkheim, French sociologist (1858-1917) He saw humans as embedded within a social context and framework. The society around people determined and influenced their religious thinking and actions. The social conditions of each society worked to shape individual decision-making and social relationships. Durkheim believed that by studying “elementary religions” he would gain insights into all religions. He saw all religions as fundamentally equal in providing basic functions for society, all religions were true in their own fashion, and all provide answers in their own ways to the difficulties of human existence.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) The mode of production shapes religious thought- Marx saw material conditions as being of primary importance in influencing humans and their beliefs. The specific ideas, concepts, and beliefs in each society arise from specific material conditions. Marx developed his ideas in opposition to Hegel who saw ideas and beliefs as the primary influencers of human behavior. The modes of production include the ways in which a society organizes its economy. The economy, and technology are the primary determinants of behavior. Per Marx all of human history is influenced by the class struggle and there have been perpetual conflicts between groups over resources and political power.

- Primitive religions arose due to human’s helplessness in their struggle against nature. With the development of class societies religion becomes rooted in the struggle between the classes, instead of being the mediator between humans and nature.
- ***“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.”*** Per Marx religion is like a narcotic, it eases pain, and creates fantasies for people. The upper classes control religion and use it to control the lower classes thoughts, and minds. The upper classes put the emphasis of religious salvation in the next world (heaven) instead of this world (so people will accept their poverty and servitude in this world). Religious ideology is used to justify inequality, slavery, political oppression. Religion serves the needs of the ruling elites per Marx.

Psychological Approaches- Sigmund Freud: Psychological explanations focus on the ways in which religious beliefs work to satisfy emotional needs. Freud saw religious beliefs and practices as arising out of human’s immaturity and deep emotional conflicts and weaknesses. Religion, in Freud’s view, functioned to aid human’s cope with life’s trauma’s. He saw religion as something that would go by the wayside as humans became more mature. Mature people, per Freud, live their lives guided by reason and science, not by superstition and faith. But until human’s became more mature religion would function to aid them in dealing with their emotional trauma’s. Within Christianity he saw humans engaging in the worship of a powerful, paternalistic God who allays their fears of nature and provides comfort and security. Freud saw religion as an illusion that humans held onto to comfort themselves.

What is Religion?

We will not utilize an exact definition of religion in this class. Read through the following to get an idea as to some of the different ways to define and describe the term religion.

History of the word in English- http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_defn.htm

The English word "*religion*" is derived from the Middle English "*religioun*" which came from the Old French "*religion*." It may have been originally derived from the Latin word "*religo*" which means "*good faith*," "*ritual*," and other similar meanings. Or it may have come from the Latin "*religāre*" which means "*to tie fast*."

"Religion is any specific system of belief about deity, often involving rituals, a code of ethics, a philosophy of life, and a worldview." (A worldview is a set of basic, foundational beliefs concerning deity, humanity and the rest of the universe.) Thus we would consider Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Native American Spirituality, and Neopaganism to be religions. We also include Agnosticism, Atheism, Humanism, Ethical Culture etc. as religions, because they also contain a "*belief about deity*" -- their belief is that they do not know whether a deity exists, or they have no knowledge of God, or they sincerely believe that God does not exist

Various Quotes in regards to Religion

Religion is a bandage that man has invented to protect a soul made bloody by circumstance. - Theodore Dreiser

Religion is like one of the senses. It is the power of the perfect human being to perceive the ultimate values. It is a special sense, like the senses of pain and of emotion, which only higher animals possess. It is dull in the feeble-minded, as the Psalmist says, The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. (Psa. 14:1) - Toyohiko Kagawa

Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint on the wicked; therefore whoever would argue or laugh it out of the world without giving some equivalent for it ought to be treated as a common enemy. - Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Religion is nothing else than love of God and man. - William Penn

Religion is something infinitely simple, ingenuous. It is not knowledge, not content of feeling.....it is not duty and not renunciation, it is not restriction: but in the infinite extent of the universe it is a direction of the heart. - Rainer Maria Rilke

Religion is love; in no case is it logic. - Beatrice Potter Webb

Religion is a necessary, an indispensable element in any great human character. There is no living without it. Religion is the tie that connects man to his Creator, and holds him to his throne. Daniel Webster

Margo Adler from *Drawing Down the Moon* (an excellent book on neopaganism!)

I use the word “religion” broadly, to refer to any set of symbolic forms and acts that relate human beings to ultimate conditions of existence, cosmic questions and universal concerns . Since we live in a world denuded of religious and mythic variety, most people in the West tend to associate the word *religion* with the type of religion they are used to. They assume that religion must contain “beliefs” and “dogmas” and must involve a remote and transcendent deity, usually male, though occasionally neuter, and often removed from human interaction. The idea of a “nature religion” seems almost a contradiction in terms. Neo-Pagans look at *religion* differently; they often point out that the root of the word means “ to relink” and “to connect,” and therefore refers to any philosophy that makes deep connections between human beings and the universe.

The Seven Characteristics of Religions: From Sacred Realms by Richard Warmes, James Garber and Jon McGee

1. Religions are composed of stories
2. Religions posit the existence of non-empirical beings, powers, states, places and qualities.
3. Religions make common use of symbols and symbolism
4. Religions include rituals.
5. Religions have clerics. The term cleric is used in the broadest sense to refer to practitioners of all sorts; leaders, authorities, officiants, formal and informal officeholders.
6. Religions frequently make use of altered states of consciousness.
7. The practice of religion changes over time.

Ask yourself the following questions in regards to religion:

What is religion? What is the role of magic and witchcraft in religion?

What do you want from a religion?

How does the way you view religion depend on:

Your economic, political, and societal context? Your personal circumstances?

Whether you are in a state of despair or feeling safe and secure?

Your personal psychology? Your ability to tolerate ambiguity?

Do you want a philosophy? Or Comforting beliefs and rituals?

A Prescription for a way of life? Or Ecstatic, transcendent experiences?

A moral compass? Rules to keep you in line?

An authoritative, paternalistic relationship? Or An impersonal relationship?

What is Magic?

In anthropology the **definition for magic is**; the intentional use of materialistic and/or ritual to bring about a desired event without a proven cause and effect relationship. This is the definition we will be using in this class.

Utilizing this definition there are a large number of activities that can be defined as magic. Many of these activities are generally not thought of as magic. For instance the use of rosary beads while praying can be defined as magic (much to my Grandmother's dismay!). The user will generally have an intention, they will manipulate the beads and say a prayer (a supplication) to bring about a desired end. Prayer can overlap with our definition of magic, although prayer usually involves pleading and magic usually involves an endeavor to bring about the desired event.

Key questions and analysis to keep in mind in regards to the discussion of magic include:

- What is Frazer's view of the role of magic in human history?
- What are the different types of magic that Frazer describes? Are there any other types of magic that Frazer has missed?
- What is most effective at curing people from illness; magic, religion or science? Do people only use magic or only use religion or only use science? Or do people use all three?
- Comparing magic, religion and science what are the basic differences in the worldview of each? Are these assumptions about the world in conflict?
- Some studies have shown that people with religious affiliations tend to have better health overall in comparison to those who have no faith or church. What would explain this?
- Claims have been made that prayer can work to heal people. In what type of scenario do you think this might be valid? Why, when and how would prayer work to heal people? Would this be a form of magic, religion or science?
- Is the use of magic rational or irrational? Can you think of different contexts in which it would be rational and contexts in which it would be irrational?

Margaret J Wiener in *Making Worlds Through Religion, Science and Magic* states that in the West we see ourselves as different and superior to other peoples around the world because we are modern and have superior technology and science. She states that we see *others* as using magic and having primitive beliefs and practices. Wiener states that in general Westerners see **knowledge as embedded in a hierarchy- some types of knowledge are better than others-** and our "scientific" knowledge is at the top. We tend to think we *know* things, while others merely *believe*. She notes that anthropologists such as *Malinowski* and *Evans-Pritchard* historically worked to show that the *magic* of traditional peoples was rational and reasonable. She asks us to examine our religion and science and discern if it is *rational and reasonable or it akin to magic...*?

- What do you think about Wiener's contentions? Do you agree or disagree with her? What data and reasoning would you put forth to support or disagree with her?

Taboos, Symbols, Myths, and Ritual

Taboos: involve a prohibition of an action, thought, or behavior. Taboo's exist in both the sacred and secular realm. All societies have taboos. Although in the early years of anthropology there were those who saw taboos as "primitive" and superstitious and only existing in traditional cultures.

Mary Douglas was one who refuted this idea. She saw taboos as existing in all cultures and as serving particular functions. She stated that it is ethnocentrism which causes us to think of the taboos of others as irrational, and/or illogical and to ignore the taboos that we have.

Mary Douglas stated that taboos arose in all cultures as a means to order our society, and to mark certain beliefs and actions in regards to the context of society. Go through her observations below to gain an understanding as to how she views taboos.

All human groups have taboos. Taboos are essential and function as rules for behavior in relation to human's interaction with things and other people. Taboos work to mark what is appropriate in different realms and situations.

Taboos are "rules of the game." Taboos are an essential means for us to classify the world around us. They allow us to make sense of our cultural system, and our place in the cultural system. Think about taboo's as rules of the game for; appropriate foods, clothes and language. We have classified certain foods as breakfast, lunch and dinner foods, many see it as taboo to eat dinner foods at breakfast. We have taboos in regards to what clothing is appropriate when and where (i.e. you don't wear a bathing suit to a business meeting). Swear words may be acceptable around your friends but are taboo around grandparents and in an academic environment.

- **Taboos can express political ideas:** who it is acceptable to touch, or to be near depending on your status.

Breaking taboos: is not just a breach of the classification system but a threat to the entire social order, and therefore will often include severe penalties. All cultures have rules and norms as to how things should be done. When people violate these rules they are undermining and challenging the status quo.

Taboos function as Classifications: Douglas noted that defining "what is what" works to reduce ambiguity and conflict in society. For instance taboos tell us how we should dress, and behave in different circumstances.

Taboos seem irrational to outsiders: No taboo makes sense without understanding the whole system of cultural rules. It is easy to see "others" taboos as irrational. However we often don't even acknowledge or see our own taboos.

A World without taboos: if everything were "okay" then the "*potential disorder of the mind*" would be overwhelming, **Taboos inject order into life:** taboo system upholds cultural system, the values and norms, an ordered social life is impossible without a pattern of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

Symbols *"If we take religious worlds to be crafted or made, if we take as our task the comprehension & interpretation of these worlds...then the way to begin is to examine the symbols.... Malinowski*

Symbols are things that stand for something else. Every human learns the symbols of its culture. The meaning of symbols in a culture will vary, although everyone in the culture will understand the significance of that symbol. Symbols are seen by anthropologists as both the primary human product and the primary human tool. Symbols are the means by which we mediate and communicate with the world around us. Symbols can be so significant that humans will fight and die over symbols. What are some symbols that are significant in American mainstream culture?

Clifford Geertz (Symbolic Anthropologist) Geertz defined religion in relationship to symbols.

1) Religion is a system of symbols which act as a model of reality (the way things are), a model for reality (how things should be). Symbols guide and direct human activity. Symbols are external sources of info publicly shared within a society

2) Religious symbols establish powerful, pervasive, long-lasting moods and motivations in men moods of happiness, sadness, elation, awe, and grief. Religious moods are like fog, coming and going with differing frequencies. Moods are made meaningful with symbols (what does the cross represent in Christianity? What does the cross represent in Vodou?). Moods establish motivations, ethical orientations (i.e. enlightenment for Buddhists, eternal salvation for Christians).

3) Religion formulates a conception of a general order of existence. Symbols engender and reaffirm this worldview, and give meaning and purpose for life. Religion and symbols give us a means to comprehend pain, suffering, evil, injustice in the world. They give us a way to have a comprehensive worldview. A logical worldview is often not very helpful in dealing with pain, suffering and evil (i.e. why does it exist? Why are some affected and others not?). Religions also gives us a means and reason for enduring (i.e. future salvation).

4) Religion and symbols cloth these conceptions with an aura of factuality so that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. Rituals (shared religious experiences, such as going to church or going to a sweat lodge) and symbols create an aura of factuality such that a deeper reality is reached.

Geertz states that the study of religion enhances our global awareness and our understanding of ourselves. Can you come up with a specific example from your life in which your insights into religion helped increase your global awareness and along with insights into yourself?

Sherry Ortner on Key Symbols

“as every experienced field-worker knows, the most difficult task in anthropological field-work is to determine the meanings of a few key words, upon an understanding of which the successes of the whole investigation depends”

Raymond Firth made some of the following observations about symbols:

- To understand symbols you need to work to understand how symbols impact behavior. Symbols are used to both “conceal and reveal” our beliefs, motivations and intentions.
 - *He states we should work to make explicit our use of symbols. How conscious are you of the symbolic nature of your communication? Symbolic communication includes, the food you eat, the restaurants you go to, the artifacts that you purchase and display.*
- Firth states that a key goal in anthropology is to observe the gap between overt action and its underlying meaning and to then engage in analysis.

Ritual

Anthony Wallace: “the primary phenomenon of religion...ritual is religion in action; it is the cutting edge of the tool. Belief, although its recitation may be part of the ritual, or a ritual in its own right, serves to explain, to rationalize, to interpret and direct the energy of the ritual performance...It is ritual which accomplishes what religion sets out to do...the prescriptive nature of ritual, that it must be done, is recognized in most anthropological definitions of ritual...conventional behavior, however, regularly repeated, is not ritual”

Ritual: Rituals involve a repetitive social practice in which there is a sequence of symbolic activities in the form of dance, song, speech, gestures, or manipulation of objects, adhering to a culturally defined format and closely connected to a specific set of ideas that are often encoded in myth.

What is the purpose of rituals?

- Did rituals develop as a means to alleviate anxiety in humans over events and situations that we don't have control over? Were rituals engaged in as a means to increase our sense of control over the world and to ease our anxiety? Malinowski stated that rituals were essential to early human lives *“without its power and guidance early man could not have mastered his practical difficulties as he has done, nor could man have advanced to the higher stages of civilization”*
- Another perspective is that rituals actually cause humans anxiety and concern. Rituals are performed in relationship to social values and norms, and it is seen as imperative that the rituals be performed exactly as proscribed. A.R. Radcliff-Brown saw rituals as functioning to enforce social values and norms and that humans experienced a great deal of anxiety and concern over their proper enactment. If a ritual is not done or it is not done properly there are often perceived dire consequences.

Types of Rites: there are two broad types of rituals or rites

Rites of Passage: these rituals mark the key transition points in peoples lives; birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Rites of Passage have three steps:

- 1) **Separation stage-** the individual is separated from their prior status, they are often marked physically in this stage.
- 2) **Liminal stage-** participants in this stage are learning what they need to know to transition to their next status. The participants often experience a strong connection with each other as they go through the learning process and the rituals. Participants are said to be betwixt and between because they are no longer a part of their past status but they have not yet moved on to their next status.
- 3) **Reincorporation stage-** where the participants are reincorporated into their new status, this is usually done with a public ceremony

Rites of Intensification generally occur during a crisis (health crisis, drought, etc.). These rites are used to bring about a positive change, to work to maintain group equilibrium and solidarity,

Myth

According to Jacob Pandian, **Myth** is a metaphorical way of knowing and affirming a reality without an empirical verification of that reality. **Mythic narratives** are histories or stories that are accepted as true, not because they are scientifically accurate, but because they are coherent and meaningful to the user. Myths may contain factual and non-factual information but this information always has a significance in the cultural tradition. When reading myths it is important to distinguish between literal and figurative ways of *knowing*.

Myths are universal. Myths often start out as an oral tradition before being put into written form. Myths typically deal with basic human questions about the nature of the world and human experience. Because of their all-encompassing nature, myths can illuminate many aspects of a culture. **There are three broad categories of myths;**

1. Cosmic myths are concerned with the world and how it is ordered. They seek to explain the origin of the world, and the afterlife. All cultures have creation stories, accounting for how human beings first came into existence and how death and suffering entered human experience.

The oldest known creation myths come from Egypt and the Near East. The Babylonian creation epic Enuma Elish dates back to at least the 12th century BC. Enuma Elish contains several themes common to many ancient Near Eastern creation stories: the ordering of the world out of chaos, the central role of water in the creation of the world, the victory of a divine king over enemies who represent chaos, and the creation of matter from the corpse of a world-mother.

Spider Women is another type of creation story from the Hopi. In this myth, in the beginning only two beings were in existence, Tawa, the sun god, and Spider Woman, an earth goddess who lived in a shadowy, cavelike underworld. Human beings were created from clay by Spider Woman and animated by the gaze of Tawa. Tawa used his light and heat to create dry land, and the world took shape. Spider Woman led the humans and other creatures up to the earth's surface, and each species was assigned its proper residence and role in the world.

2. **Goddess/God myths** focus on the activities of the gods in their own realm. Many mythologies around the world discuss a divine family, or pantheon and across cultures we see similar characters. Think of the Greek and Roman pantheon's of Goddesses and Gods.

Tricksters are a common character. The trickster is recklessly bold and even immoral, but through his inventiveness he often helps human beings. Hermes, in Greek mythology (best known as the messenger of the gods) was a famous trickster. Other tricksters of mythology are the West African god Eshu, who tricked the supreme god Olodumare into abandoning the earth to dwell in heaven; the Indian god Krishna, whose trickery often aims at a higher moral purpose; and the Native American Coyote, who scattered the once-orderly stars in the sky and strewed the plants on earth.

3. **Hero myths:** In similar myths from around the world we find a hero setting off on a journey of some kind. The Gilgamesh epic is one of the earliest hero myths, it was put into written form around 2000BC. Gilgamesh, the hero, embarks on a quest for immortality. A goddess named Siduri guides him, and in the course of his adventures he must do combat with monsters and visit the world of the dead. At the end of the quest, Gilgamesh must accept mortality, which the gods allotted to human beings when they created them. Another familiar hero myth is the Celtic tale of King Arthur and the quest for the Holy Grail.

There are various ways in which anthropologists analyze myths. According to James Frazer the earliest humans first attributed natural phenomena to arbitrary supernatural forces (magic), later explaining them as the will of the gods (religion), and finally subjecting them to rational investigation (science). French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that the primary function of myths is to resolve contradictions between such basic sets of opposites as life and death, nature and culture, and self and society

Myths function as a societal charter, model for behavior; Myths explain the origins of the world, origin of life on earth, death, and all other experiences of human existence.

"myth is a statement of primeval reality which lives in the institutions and pursuits of a community. It justifies precedent the existing order and it supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, of sociological discrimination and burdens and of magical belief...the function of myth is to strengthen tradition and to endow it w/a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural, and more effective reality of initial events"

Bronislaw Malinowski

General Questions asked in study of mythic narratives:

- Why do particular mythic narratives exist in different societies?
- Why do certain kinds of mythic narratives occur over and over in different societies?
- What is the relationship between mythic narratives and society?
- Do mythic narratives reveal unconscious processes of workings in the mind?
- Are mythic narratives expressions of common human experiences of suffering, death, etc.?
- Are mythic narratives distortions of historical events?

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patron Saint of Mexico Myth, Symbol Ritual, and Taboo

*"Mother, food, hope, health, life; supernatural salvation and salvation from oppression;
Chosen people and national independence- all find expression in a single symbol...the
Guadalupe symbol thus links together family, politics, and religion; colonial past and
independent present; Indian and Mexico"*
Eric Wolf

The Origin Myth: How Our Lady of Guadalupe came to be the Patron Saint of Mexico...

The Virgin Mary, the Mother of the One True God, appeared to Juan Diego, Dec. 9th, 1531 on Tepeyec Hill. Juan Diego, an Indian convert to Catholicism, was shocked to see her appear as he walked to church. She told him she had appeared to him because he needed to relay her wishes to the Bishop:

*"tell the Bishop to build a shrine at this site, a place for my people to come and seek my
love and compassion, I am now the protectress of the Indians in Mexico"*

The story of her appearance to Juan Diego states that Mary appeared to Juan Diego as a brown-skinned female, dressed as an Aztec women, speaking Nahuatl (the indigenous language of the Aztecs).

She appeared to Juan Diego at Tepeyec Hill. Tepeyec Hill was the site where the temple for **Tonantzin**, the Aztec Mother Goddess, was destroyed by Cortez as he invaded the Aztec capital. For generations the Aztecs paid homage to Tonantzin at Tepeyec Hill. Tonantzin represented earth, and fertility to the Aztecs, she was worshipped as the giver of life.

The timing of her appearance was ten years into the Spanish conquest. Ten years since the Aztec's were overthrown by the Spanish. The Aztecs were defeated militarily, their political structure was overthrown, missionaries came and condemned and outlawed their religion. The Indians were defeated, and demoralized. They had suffered the loss of their natural world and their supernatural world. However most of the Indians were not converting to the new religion being imposed on them by the Spanish.

Juan Diego and the Bishop. In the story Juan Diego appears before the Bishop and tells him of the appearance of Mary and her command. The Church is to build a shrine at Tepeyec Hill and this will serve as a focus for the people of Mexico to come and to seek her assistance. The Bishop discounts Juan Diego's story and demands proof. The next day, as Juan Diego is once again walking to church, Mary appears and tells him to find a bunch of roses (at a spot where they normally would not grow) and to bring them to the Bishop as proof of her appearance. Juan Diego gathers the roses in his tilma (cloak) and after gaining another audience with the reluctant Bishop he unfolds his cloak, the roses fall out and an image of Mary is seen to be imprinted on his tilma. The shocked and now believing Bishop acknowledges the appearance of a miracle and eventually a shrine to the Virgin Mary, in the incarnation of Our Lady of Guadalupe is built. Since Juan Diego's time this site has been a continuous focus of prayer, appeal and pilgrimage.

What REALLY happened? Data for analysis

The above is a general description of the story that is told in regards to Juan Diego, the appearance of Mary and the Bishop. There are several different versions but none differ significantly from the story above. Here are a couple of points to keep in mind:

- The first written record of Juan Diego's story was completed in 1558, some twenty-seven years after the event was said to have occurred.
- Over the next 20 years some 7-9 millions Indians converted to Catholicism.
- Tepeyec, was the pilgrimage site for the Aztec goddess Tonantzin, now Aztecs flock to the new shrine ostensibly to worship the Christian figure, Mary in the incarnation of The Virgin of Guadalupe.

How did Mary actually look when she appeared to Juan Diego? Most of the myths telling of her appearance to Juan Diego describe her as "brown skinned, in native attire" but some have observed by looking at the picture on tilma that "*Aztec princesses apparently looked a lot like Renaissance Italian ladies.*" The women imprinted on the Diego's tilma does not look very brown skinned or appear to be wearing native attire. This cloak is on display at the Basilica in Mexico City

What really happened? What are three ways we can explain what happened?

1)

2)

3)

As a Symbol- what does Guadalupe represent?

"When Mexican's no longer believe in anything, they will still hold fast to their belief in two things: the Nat'l Lottery & the Virgin of Guadalupe... for both have been known to work, even for those of us who believe in nothing...The Virgin IS Mexico- fiesta & fervor, food & devoted song, dance & penance. She is the image that gave birth to a nation, that is the cornerstone of national pride and strength" Octavio Paz

Eric Wolf, an anthropologist states that Guadalupe is a symbol of;

One, a natural mother of the Indians, a passionate source of love, warmth, and comfort. Two, a supernatural mother of the Indians, she stands for life, hope, and health (whereas Christ on the cross represents despair, and death)

Guadalupe "*serves as symbolic testimony that the Indian, as much as the Spaniard, was capable of being saved, capable of receiving Christianity*" she "*validates Indians right to legal defense, orderly gov't, to citizenship, to supernatural salvation*"

Dolores Huerta "*I don't think I could have survived without her*" "*she is a symbol of faith, hope, and leadership*" Guadalupe was on the banner of UFW w/saying "*Si se puede- Yes, It can be done*"

Taboo: Who “owns” the symbol of the Virgin of Guadalupe?

Is the Virgin of Guadalupe a symbol of the Catholic Church? A symbol of the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico? Over time there has been a great deal of controversy in regards to her symbol. There are a number of artists who have used her in their artwork. In New Mexico Yolanda Lopez painted the Virgin in a floral bikini with a bare breasted angel holding her up and her art show was criticized by the Catholic Church. The Archbishop Sheehan stated:

“I wish that those who want to paint controversial art would find their own symbols to trash and leave the Catholic ones alone...to depict the Virgin Mary in a floral bikini held aloft by a bare breasted angel is to be insulting...sacrilegious... instead of showing her as the innocent Mother of Jesus, she is shown as a tart or street women”

Yolanda Lopez responded by stating that she was raised Catholic and Guadalupe was revered in her Catholic household. Yolanda saw Guadalupe as a “*super, holy, motherly, figure...I grew up with that image, it’s not like I’m a stranger to it.*” She stated that her painting was part of “*a sincere effort to find a different connection for her.*” Lopez stated that she did not view Mary as a passive and traditional mother. She states that “*the mother of Jesus would definitely be an amazingly strong and powerful women...for me the breast has to do with mothering and nurturing*”

Rhonda Barnes another artist who comments on the symbolization of the Virgin of Guadalupe, she notes that the “*religion, and culture of Mexico are both patriarchal, and how unique it is that this image of a women brings people together, gives them strength.*” She sees Guadalupe as a liberating symbol, a symbol that unifies and identifies Mexican culture. She concurs with Lopez in her conceptualization of Guadalupe as a strong women “*...she is no longer a passive mother figure, her image has a liberating effect on women...“by re-interpreting her image artists like Lopez are challenging societies assumptions about women’s roles and are demanding justice for women”*

Ritual

Lastly, the site originally occupied by Tonantzín, now occupied by a Catholic Basilica, and which has on display what is said to be the original cloak worn by Juan Diego, miraculously imprinted with the image of the Virgin Mary in her incarnation as the Virgin of Guadalupe is the site of ongoing pilgrimages by faithful believers. Especially around her chosen day, December 12th, you will likely see carts pulled by the faithful, some on their hands and knees, arriving to garner her grace and blessing for themselves and their village. Ex-voto’s (paintings to give thanks for prayers answered), altars, bulto’s (devotional statues), and retablo’s (devotional painting) are all in evidence devoted to her image.

So...in what way is the Virgin of Guadalupe a myth, symbol, taboo and ritual?

Shaman's and Shamanism

In almost all known cultures there are individuals who are seen to be religious specialists. These individuals act as intermediaries between the supernatural realm and the community. Shamans are said to be practitioners of the "world's oldest profession." They are part-time intermediaries who interact with the supernatural realm for individuals and their cultural group. Shamans access the supernatural realm for healing, divination and to work to bring about positive change. Shamans exist in traditional societies.

In traditional societies (see notes in the History and Context of Anthropological Studies section) no one is a full time specialist and there are no full time religious specialists or political leaders. There are individuals who are seen as healers and diviners and these individuals go to the supernatural realm to aid members of their community. These societies are largely homogeneous, there is one language spoken, one world view that all members share. There is not a distinction made between a religious and a secular worldview, there is the worldview of the community.

"Ordinarily religion pervades everything; everything social is religious; the two words are synonymous, then little by little political, economic, scientific functions free themselves from the religious function, constitute themselves apart and take on a more and more acknowledged temporal (secular)role" Durkheim

An Animistic Worldview pervades in shamanistic cultures. This is the belief that humans, animals, and natural objects (rivers, mountains, etc.) possess a soul or essence. This soul can leave the body and wander around. When this soul or life force is damaged, stolen, or removed this is what is believed to cause illness.

- All spirits have an essence similar to ours. These spirits experience and display love, jealousy, and anger. These spirits can enter the human realm and help or harm humans depending on their nature and our actions and relationship with them.

Initially shamanism was believed to be focused on hunting activities. It was a Hunter's Religion. Hunting is a difficult and dangerous endeavor. Shamans worked to aid in having a successful hunt by forming a relationship with prey. They worked to ensure that there was plenty of game available for their group. Shamans also worked to give thanks to animals for their sacrifice used to feed humans.

Shamanic Worldview and Practices

Multiple realms of reality: In shamanistic cultures there is a belief that multiple realms of reality exist. Humans generally occupy the middle realm and other spirits exist in the lower and upper realms. Shamans enter altered states of consciousness to enable them to journey to these other realms. Shamans contact other spirits to divine why individuals are ill or why their prey is scarce or their crops aren't growing.

The Shamans journey starts with an intention. Generally their goal is to find out why someone is ill or why there is a lack of game or a drought. The shaman's journey to other realms can be very dangerous. Often the shaman's journey to the supernatural realm is battle in which the shaman works to entice, or coerce spirits to aid him/her. There is the danger that the shaman may lose all or part of their own soul or life force and must struggle to stay whole and safe so they can return to their community.

Preparation for journey: Prior to their journey to other realms shamans will generally have to abstain from sex, and certain foods. They often must work to make themselves attractive (ritual purity, bodily adornment) to draw spirits to them.

Shamans enter altered states of consciousness-they do this in a variety of ways, from hallucinogenic drugs to drumming, chanting, and/or singing. Mircea Eliade called them the “*ecstatic ones*.”

The Shamans soul leaves the body and travels to other realms often by way of a pole, axis, or tree. The journey requires skill, courage, shaman encounters other spirits and must negotiate, fight overcome them to achieve goal, “master of spirits.”

Becoming a shaman: can be inherited or the result of a “calling” (near death experience, dreams) Becoming a shaman often requires months to years of training during which time they must abstain from sex, certain foods, learn to travel to other realms, acquire power animals, helping spirits. Shamans are “*taught to fly to other worlds, your flesh is stripped from your body, reduced to a skeleton, then reassembled, and you are reborn with new powers, able to combat spirits, heal victims, kill enemies, and save one’s people from starvation*”

Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge/ Jeremy Narby

Jeremy Narby, a Swiss anthropologist wrote the above book after his experiences in South America with a traditional shaman. Narby was in South America doing work for the United Nations and while he was there he had a relapse of a severe back problem that had plagued him his whole life. Without western medical help available to him, and feeling he had nothing to lose at that point (being in tremendous, incapacitating pain) he agreed to a healing ritual with a local shaman. Narby found that after being treated by the shaman his back was in better shape than it had been in years. This experience changed Narby's life and since then he has been fascinated with shaman's and shamanic practices.

In his book Narby asked the following question:

"How have traditional peoples gained their knowledge of the medicinal and hallucinatory value of plants?"

Shaman's told Narby that their knowledge comes from the plants they use. Shaman's stated that the plants they use (to engage in hallucinogenic experiences) communicate with them when they are in the supernatural realm. The shaman's statements contradict western knowledge, which states that information can't be obtained from plants or while on hallucinogens.

Narby notes that some 74% of modern plant based remedies used in the West were discovered by traditional peoples. The traditional explanation is that Indigenous Peoples discovered how to use plants for curing after thousands of years of trial and error experimentation. Narby sees a contradiction in that we accept the results but not the methods of indigenous peoples. He says that we have a blind spot in science and anthropology...

After much research and analysis Narby developed a hypothesis, he states that:

When shamans enter altered states of reality and experience their visions (by ingesting hallucinogenic plants) they take their consciousness down to the molecular level and gain information as to basis of life (DNA). With this knowledge of the basis of life, and with their consciousness at the molecular level shamans are able to gain information from plants as to their essence. This is how shaman's know how to make and use plants for curing and to experience altered states of reality.

Narby's conclusions are as follows:

- Western culture has cut itself off from the serpent/life principle- from DNA since we adopted an exclusively rational world view
- Peoples who practice shamanism communicate with DNA
- Western culture has discovered the material essence of life some 3,000 years later than traditional peoples....
- *People use different techniques in different places to gain access to knowledge of the vital principle....*

Witchcraft

“The Witch may be the Other, but Witchcraft beliefs are in Ourselves”

What is a Witch? “witches are the antithesis of proper behavior...destructive, malicious, the incarnation of the “other,” they fly thru the air, transform themselves and others into animals, change their shape, kill at a distance, master demons and ghosts, practice evil, break all taboo’s and social rules, have sexual orgies, practice human sacrifice....They encompass all of the qualities associated with a poor neighbor; unsociable, stingy, isolated, unfriendly...

(Which of the above descriptions are fantastic in regards to witches and which are mundane?)

Anthropological Definition of a Witch

Witches: are individuals with innate power within them, they can harm individuals and/or communities with this power. Witches are generally thought of as using their powers to cause harm. There are no objective means to prove someone is a witch, although all cultures have their subjective criteria to “prove” a witch. Witches may or may not be conscious of their innate powers and may or may not be able to consciously control their powers (this varies by culture).

Anthropological Study of Witches

A belief in witches and sorcerers is very common among human groups. Anthropological studies of witches and witchcraft accusations work to attain both emic and etic perspectives of this phenomena.

Emic descriptions: What are the meanings and behaviors associated with witchcraft beliefs and witchcraft accusations in the words and view of the believers?

Etic analysis: An etic analysis looks to discern cause and effect relationships. For instance; In what type of societies do witchcraft beliefs flourish? What happens when there are witchcraft accusations? How does the belief in witches function in a society?

Anthropological analysis functions at different levels

Psychological level: beliefs in witches give people explanations for why bad things happen and gives them a specific target and prescription for their problems. In societies that accept the validity of witches there is always a means to deal with the witches.

Societal level: witchcraft beliefs abound in village, peasant societies, where mobility is limited (people can’t easily leave if there is a problem or conflict). Witchcraft accusations can allow for the release of tensions in times of stress and change-witchcraft charges act as a “safety valve.” Within these cultures they practice reciprocity and have a concept that there is a limited amount of “goods” available.

- **Limited good:** the belief that there is a limited amount of health and wealth. If one individual or family in a community has continued good health while others get sick or become wealthy while others are barely eking out an existence then they are liable to be accused of witchcraft. They must be using witchcraft to get more than their share.
- **Leveling device:** economic systems of reciprocity, redistribution – accusations work to “level” – to keep everybody at the same economic level (if accused of witchcraft the individual usually loses their wealth)

We generally don't see witchcraft beliefs in foraging and hunting groups as well as industrial or post industrial societies. These groups have more mobility than village groups and so when there are problems people can leave and go to another group.

Cultural level: the cultural values and norms of a group of people come about through a wide variety of influences from the environment to their history. Robin Briggs looks at how “religion, magic, witchcraft are inextricably linked thru human history.” The worldviews of a culture play a role in its belief in witchcraft or sorcery.

Clyde Kluckhohn's Study of the Navaho. In Kluckhohn's study of the Navaho he found that witchcraft beliefs functioned;

- **As an economic leveler-** The Navaho believe that an individual can only become wealthy through secret, supernatural techniques, in other words through witchcraft. If an individual is prosperous, especially if those in their community are doing poorly, they will be subject to witchcraft accusations. The best way to forestall these types of rumors is to be generous, redistributing wealth among family and friends
- **As an enforcer of social values-** The Navaho believe that if the elderly are not cared for properly they will turn into witches. This belief leads to the Navaho being careful to treat the aged properly. The early death of a close relative can lead to others being suspicious, so people are careful in the way that they treat their relatives. It is also believed that those in leadership positions have access to witches and therefore they must be obeyed.
- **To aid individuals at the psychological level:** Witchcraft accusations can be an outlet for hostility. Individuals who face an unexplained illness or who have their crops do poorly may explain these unfortunate events through witchcraft. Those accused of witchcraft are scapegoats for negative events.

Witchcraft in Traditional Societies

Witchcraft beliefs often involve an animistic worldview (the belief that all beings, human, non-human animals, as well as natural phenomena have a life force, soul or essence. Witchcraft involves the capturing of this life force. If one's life force has been attached by a witch they can become very ill and even die. However, in all these societies there is a prescription to deal with this attack, there are always means by which a witches attack can be dealt with.

African Witchcraft: Nigerian writer E.B. Idowu

Witchcraft is their "reality," spirits of human beings can leave their body, witches can use visible or invisible "guilds" to do their work, witches "spirits" meet in groups, and their goal is to wreck havoc on others, all harm is done through and to spirits

"In the case of witches or their victims, spirits meet spirits, spirits operate on spirits, while the actual human bodies lie asleep in their homes..."

Bangwa Child Witches- Robert Brain, 1970's

Bangwa Cosmology states that children can be witches. Child witches can harm others as well as themselves. Witches are said to harm their victims by "eating" in the sky. When a witch engages in this behavior their victims becomes ill and will sometimes die. The Bangwa believe that if a child is acting as a witch that they can be stopped if they are given meat. The eating of meat will satiate a witch. Then they will not "eat their victims in the sky."

Context in which beliefs operate: The Bangwa have food taboo's which limit the protein of children. For the most part only males are allowed to consume meat and other good sources of protein. Children often don't get the protein they need.

Function of witchcraft beliefs: is to mediate children's need for protein and meat. Children who "confess" to practicing witchcraft will be given meat so they will not "eat" their victims.

European Witchcraft persecutions 1450-1750- Diabolical Witchcraft

In Medieval Europe somewhere between 40,000 to a high estimate of 9 million individuals were executed for being witches (40,000 is the most accepted academic number). They were charged with being in league with Satan, operating in covens, holding sabbats and working to harm individuals and communities where they lived.

An Anthropological of the Witchcraft Persecutions in Europe requires that we be holistic, and utilize both emic perspective and etic perspectives. To date, science has not validated the belief that there are individuals who have innate psychic powers or abilities and so our questions are

Why do humans have a belief in witches?

Why did witchcraft accusations suddenly proliferate in Europe?

Who was responsible for the witchcraft accusations and persecutions?

Who benefited and who was harmed by the witchcraft accusations and persecutions?

Context of the Witchcraft “witchcraze” (culture, society, psychology) Churches changing ideas, threats to the church from different groups, Inquisition is implemented to deal with heretics 1227 (use of torture authorized 1252), perceived heretical groups and outsiders targeted by the Inquisition, the Plague 1347-1351 kills 1/3 of individuals in Europe (25 million) with many smaller plagues occurring over the years, Malleus Maleficarum written in 1486, Martin Luther Reformation 1517, overall changes in feudal society (economic, political, social changes)

What REALLY happened in Europe with the Witchcraft Persecutions?

We will not come to any absolute conclusions as to what happened during this time of witchcraft accusations and persecutions. We will review a range of views and perspectives as to what happened during this timeframe.

Did witches actually exist in Medieval Europe? Keep in mind the word witch can be a label that is put on an individual or a group but it may not be the label that they would apply to themselves.

- Were there individuals and/or groups who self-identified as witches?
- Were there individuals who were pagans or midwives and were labeled as witches?
- Was the witchcraze and witchcraft accusations created by: neighbors and fellow villagers, those in political power, the church, or.....
- Was there really a witchcraze? Which implies out of control, wholesale accusations, persecutions and executions. Or was there a moderate, systematic number of accusations, persecutions and executions in a time when capital punishment was common for offenses as minor as stealing a loaf of bread?

The following are some of the various perspectives that have been put forth to explain what happened:

A Goddess Cult existed in Prehistoric Europe: The contention is that prior to Christianity there were matriarchal societies who worshipped a supreme Goddess. These people lived in harmony with nature, and celebrated nature's and life's cycles. Over time they were overthrown and pushed underground by patriarchal invaders from the north who worshipped Male sky gods. The church persecuted these underground pagans as devil worshipping witches.

Margaret Murray 1921 "Witchcult in Western Europe": The individuals persecuted as witches were survivors of pre-Christian religions. These early pagans did exist in covens and did convene in sabbats. However, these underground pagans were "shamanistic" in their practices and were not in league with the Christian devil (they didn't even believe in the Christian devil). These individuals were persecuted by the Christian church as it worked to eliminate "competing" beliefs.

Mircea Eliade: Eliade agreed with Murray, he believed shamanistic pagans did live underground in Christian Europe. They held onto their beliefs and practiced their rituals in secret. These individuals were then persecuted as accomplices of the devil (A devil they did not worship or believe in).

Malleus Maleficarum (The Hammer of Witches): Two Dominican monks, Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger wrote this book in 1486. The book is an incredibly detailed description of ; what a witch was, how to identify witches and what should be done with witches. The text is very misogynistic. Females are described as biologically inferior and therefore more susceptible to the devil's allure and to becoming a witch. The monks describe women as operating in covens and have sexual orgies with the devil. The book details all kinds of sexual perversities that females are supposed to have engaged in while in league with the devil. The Malleus Maleficarum was the second best selling text next to the bible. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches used this book as their "witch-hunting manual."

Witchcraft as a Church/Political Creation-H.R. Trevor-Roper: Per Trevor-Roper the belief in witches was used as a part of a deliberate policy to achieve political goals. Pagan beliefs in witches were universal and were tolerated for a long time because the church declared witches an illusion propagated by the devil. But as the church was threatened by heretical groups witches were declared to be real and in league with the devil. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches persecuted witches as a means to maintain church and state control of the population. The real reason that the confessions at the trials sounded the same was because the confessions were framed by the political and religious powers of the time

Witches were Midwives & Nurses- Ehrenreich and English: This perspective is that most all of the individuals burned at the stake were women, upwards of 95% and extremely large numbers of women were said to have been killed, upwards of 9 million. Women healers and midwives who had traditionally served the peasant population were targeted by the church and political powers of the day. According to some feminist researchers the persecutions mark one of the opening struggles in the history of man's suppression of women as healers. These actions paved the way for a male dominated medical profession." In this view the witch-hunts well-organized campaigns initiated, financed, and executed by the church and state against women.

Witchcraft as Delusion-Norman Cohen: Per Cohen since antiquity human groups have held the belief that in the midst of the larger society there is a small, secret group engaged in inhuman practices; infanticide, incest, cannibalism. Christians initially accused Jews and heretical Christian groups, then witches as engaging in these practices. Per Cohen Witchcraft persecutions rest in human psychology, witches lie in our subconscious, our obsessive fears and our terrifying desires...but a belief in witches is a fantasy, a delusion, no story with impossible elements such as flying thru the air, turning into animals should be accepted as truth. So in this view, the persecutions came out of human fears and paranoia, not any objective reality or threat.

Witches & Neighbors: Robin Briggs: Per Briggs witchcraft must be placed within a societal, cultural, and human context. There is no evidence that witches existed, and still less evidence that they operated in covens and held dark masses. Briggs notes that many individuals dabbled in the occult, but not in an organized fashion. He states that some of those accused were female healers, and some were pagans, both of which the church forbid. Per Briggs, the persecutions are a classic example of "*multiple causation which varied across time and space*". By this he means that if you look over the some 300 years of persecutions, and the dozens and dozens of countries where the trials took place we can see many different explanations as to what happened. His emphasis is on neighbors. Briggs states from his review of trial documents that most of the accusations were neighbor against neighbor. Often there was conflict over decades before a witchcraft accusation was made. He states the witchcraft "craze" can be seen as the ultimate constructed crime (nor does he think it was a craze). Per Briggs, an explanation for the persecutions can be disarmingly simple- "*people believed in witches, laws were passed to enable suspects to be taken to court... the puzzle is less why this should have happened than why it didn't occur earlier.*" He states that understanding witchcraft involves understanding ourselves, and our past in a very deep sense

Marvin Harris- Cultural Materialism: Make sure to read the two chapters and go over the questions to gain insight into Harris's view of the witchcraft persecutions. Keep in mind his theoretical orientation which states that the three levels of societies are inter-related.

Wicca and Neo-Pagan Movements

Wicca and Neo-Pagan Movements: took off during the 1960's and 1970's in Europe and the States. Initially, the practitioners claimed Paleolithic, pre-Christian origins for their beliefs and practices. They stated that they were reviving beliefs and practices that had survived the Burning Times in Europe and had been driven underground by Christian political states.

Many individuals saw a worship of nature and a Goddess as a means for women to worship the divine in their own image. Pagan and Wiccan values went along with their desire to foster concern and care for the environment, and as a means to advocate peaceful approaches to humanities conflicts. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of different Neo-Pagan and Wiccan groups, primarily located in North America and Europe. Most of the groups take their inspiration from pre-Christian religions around the world (Norse, Celtic, Egyptian, African, and Native American gods and goddesses, etc.)

“Earth religion, all is “holy,” you are holy, the earth is holy, believe the energy you put back into the world comes back to you, worship the Goddess & Gods (polytheistic), focus on healing and self-knowledge, find inspiration in pre-Christian sources

What is Wicca? There are a variety of answers that have been given to this question over time and space. There is no single, written doctrine for Wicca. The only belief that is, pretty much universal, is the Three Fold Rule, the belief that anything that you do, either positive or negative will come back three-fold.

To be a witch *“one must think both mythically and rationally, and never confuse the two and never be surprised at the weird zoological beasts that walk into the circle”*

- “we could not define what a witch is in words...our reality is intuitive...we know when we encounter one who is worshipping in the same way...it is an attitude towards life... a way of living...it is an archetype, a cluster of powerful images
- *“the radical impact of the witch archetype is that she invades the civilized community, she enters it, she changes it...she heralds the timeless process of originating out of the unconscious new forms of human consciousness and society...”*

What do Wiccans or practitioners of the Craft do? “being an active and practicing witch takes time and effort...you must work to increase your potential powers...you must take time to learn...wicca is a practical religion” Essence of the Craft is to; be in touch with ourselves, our fellow humans, get in touch with lunar and solar cycles.

Principles of Wiccan Belief: Practice Rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces, phases of the moon, and seasons. There are special responsibilities to the environment, and they seek to live in harmony w/nature. Often there is a belief that a “supernatural” power exists within all of us. There is no recognition of an authoritarian hierarchy although they do respect those who share wisdom. They work to gain access to the forces within themselves, to live wisely and well, without harm to others, in harmony with Nature. They do not believe in absolute evil.

Code of Ethics: The three fold rule, whatever energy you put out into the world, for good or ill, will return three-fold. You may do whatever you will, just so long as your actions harm no person, place or thing.

Sects of Wicca: range from **traditional Gardnerians and Alexandarians**, followers of early books on Wicca to followers of **various pre-Christian religions** (Celtic, African, etc.) and their different goddesses/gods from the past. There are **individual practitioners, feminists** turning away from patriarchal religions, **environmentalists** as means of worshipping and protecting the earth. "all things are sacred." There are those in the **faery tradition** "we see ourselves as enchanted," much of reality is unseen, appreciate manic creativity, possession. The **reclaiming tradition**, Starhawk is of this branch, they link their worship of the earth to political action.

Neopagans: in general follow a nature religion, with polytheism as a philosophy, "accepting & embracing a bit of chaos in their spiritual perspective w/out denying rational modes of thinking"

Margo Adler in her interviews found six primary reasons offered for becoming a pagan:

1) beauty, vision, imagination, 2) intellectual satisfaction, 3) growth, 4) feminism, 5) environment, 6) freedom

Students are seeking access to all the gods, eastern and western, primitive and modern, heretical and orthodox, mad and sane, these Gods are not to be believed in or trusted but to be used to give shape to an increasingly complex and variegated experience of life" William Hamilton, theologian

Dia de los Muertos- Day of the Dead

Octavio Paz stated that it is part of the Mexican character to be undaunted by death, that Mexicans have no qualms about getting up close and personal with death...

the Mexican..."chases after it, mocks it, courts it, hugs it, sleeps with it, it is his favorite plaything and his most lasting love" Mexicans view death as a transition of life, a normal stage in the circle on earth, a natural progression, not an ending.

In Mexico people are said to die three deaths *"The first death is when our bodies cease to function; when our hearts no longer beat of their own accord, when our gaze no longer has depth or weight, when the space we occupy slowly loses its meaning. The second death comes when the body is lowered into the ground, returned to Mother Earth, out of sight. The third death, the most definitive death, is when there is no one left alive to remember us."*

For all eternity," muses an old man, "my descendents will remember me and, on the eve of every second of November, I will come back to them. I will find the house filled with food, incense, the light of candles, and warmth. And I will come in and, forever and ever, that one night of the year, I will be among my own."

Introduction, History, and Meanings associated with Dia de los Muertos

All humans acknowledge death and have means (informal and formal) by which they remember those that have died. In Mexico there is an annual celebration to honor the spirits of the dead (it is also observed in other Latin American countries). There is the belief that on the Day of the Dead, the spirits of the dead return to commune with the living, on this day the barriers between the worlds of the living and the dead are diminished. There are three general ways in which this day (sometimes it is several days or a week) is celebrated; 1) with fiesta's, 2) with the creation of an altar, and 3) with the decoration and visiting of the gravesite.

Day of the Dead celebrations reflect the syncretic nature of Mexican history, a combination of indigenous beliefs accumulated over thousands of years and traditions from Spanish Catholicism. Practices vary from region to region, over time and also between different social groups within the same community (socioeconomic and ethnic groups). Some communities hold multiple Day of the Dead celebrations during the last week of October and the first week of November. During these elaborate observances, specific days are usually set aside for various classes of spirits, such as those of people who died violently or those who have died within the last year. *"It is celebrated differently depending on where you go."* In rural Mexico, people visit the cemetery and decorate gravesites with marigold flowers and candles. They bring toys for deceased children and bottles of tequila for deceased adults and sit on picnic blankets next to the gravesites, eating the favorite foods of their loved ones.

Some families build altars in their homes, the altars are filled with flowers, candles, food and pictures of the deceased. *"We play their favorite music and make their favorite food."* Special loaves of bread (hojaldra) are baked for the holiday and are included in the offerings to the spirits.

In some homes the altars are exclusively dedicated to deceased family members but in others they may *“pay homage to the Mexicans killed in auto accidents while being smuggled across the border, and more recently we’ve been honoring the memories of those killed in Columbine.”* *“At midnight the spirits are called home with the mournful tolling of bells...then each is lovingly remembered with recitations of the Rosary.”* After the spirits have been given an opportunity to partake of the offerings, the celebrants eat the food. Leftover food is placed on the graves of dead relatives or distributed to living relatives and other members of the community. A washbasin, towel, soap and a mirror are placed nearby so that returning spirits can freshen-up before beginning to feast on their once favorite food. The act of preparing an altar, placing photographs, flowers, favorite foods and drink for the loved one(s) provides a special time to remember and to transform grief into acceptance. Living family members invite deceased family members spirits to return home for a few hours of laughter, tears, and memories. Preparing for the return of the spirits each year requires that the family remember and honor their dead and gives them a chance to heal.

In Mexico City, many celebrants construct papier-mache skeletons and skulls made from sugar. Elaborate visual displays of skeletons adorn bakeries. Skeletons are portrayed engaging in all of the activities living people engage in; riding bikes, dancing, eating, etc. The newspapers carry written Calaveras about individuals both living and dead. Calavera’s are rhymed, humorous, pseudo epitaphs; skeletons made of different materials; graphic cartoons or plastic scenes with skeleton characters

Day of the Dead rituals have been practiced by indigenous groups for some 3,000 years. The Spaniards tried unsuccessfully to eradicate these practices and over time the practices were merged with Catholic theology. The Aztecs for instance utilized skulls in their rituals and people today don wooden skull masks called *calecas* and dance in honor of their deceased relatives. Wooden (or plastic or candy) skulls are placed on alters that are dedicated to the dead. Sugar skulls made with the names of the dead person on the forehead, are eaten by a relative or friend. The skulls symbolize death and rebirth, and are used to honor the dead who are believed to come back during this time frame. Unlike the Spaniards who viewed death as the end of life, the natives viewed it as the continuation of life. Instead of fearing death the natives embraced it. To them, life was a dream and only in death did they become truly awake. However, the Spaniards considered the rituals to be sacrilegious and the indigenous people to be barbaric and pagan. In recognition of how difficult it is to eliminate a groups sacred celebrations the Spanish linked the Day of the Dead celebrations with All Saint’s Day (Hallowmas where all saints known and unknown are honored) and All Soul’s Day (a day in which prayers and alms are given to assist souls in purgatory).

Voodoo in Haiti....Alfred Metraux 1959

"What is Voodoo? A conglomeration of beliefs and rites of African origin, mixed with Catholic practice... its devotees ask of it what men have always asked of religion: remedy for ills, satisfaction for needs and the hope of survival...Voodoo is difficult to study, it is a cluster of different ceremonies, beliefs, practices, all changing and changeable"

The peoples and cultures of the Caribbean region should be among the most western of the modern world is not, in fact, mysterious: after all they were among the first victims of the West. In the case of Haiti, they were also among the first to fight back successfully. That struggle was ideological as well as physical; voodoo was part of it" Alfred Metraux

"Haiti has always been two places. First it was the Haiti of the masters and the slaves. Now it is Haiti of the wealthy and educated mulattoes and the Haiti of the Blacks." Nora Zeal Hurston

"Voodoo is...well it may be whatever you have been indoctrinated to believe it to be" Ron Bodin

"The spirit is the wind. Everywhere I go, they go too...to protect me" Alourdes/Mama Lola

Vodou: is a syncretic religion. It is a mixture of Western African animistic religions and Catholicism, it originated in Haiti and to be a follower is to be an individual who serves the spirits.

One creator God- Le Bon Dieu, created universe and then withdrew from daily human affairs
"he conjures up no precise image, he's too far away for there to be much point even in addressing him, "he's a nice easygoing papa who wouldn't even dream of getting angry or frightening people, with him it will be easy to come to some arrangement when you have to give an account of your life, there's no point therefore in serving him too seriously"

Secondary divinities- Loa created by God for humans, humans seek protection, guidance, blessings from spirits, each individual has their special spirit(s). Humans must constantly work to maintain a harmonious relationship w/spirits to be able to prosper, ritual used to foster positive relations.

"Loa love us, protect us, and guard us. They tell us what is happening to our relations who live far away, they suggest to us remedies which bring us relief when we are sick...If we are hungry the loa appear to us in a dream and say, Take Courage you Will Earn Money, and the promised money comes, the loa also warn us of the machinations of those who wish us harm"

The sensitivity of the loa is as raw as that of men they are very touchy in matters of ritual, if they don't get allotted number of dances, or the food they like, they can become angry and be cruel. The Loa each have own special drum rhythms, musical instruments, dances, salutations, each has own color, days of the week that are special

Below are some of the Loa within the Vodou pantheon:

Damballah-wedo/ serpent god: a benevolent, loving father, he doesn't communicate his wisdom well, but his presence is a source of peace and tranquility, father of falling waters, he is much loved and sought after, he rests in the trees,

Aida-Wedo: the rainbow, wife, counterpoint to Damballah, they are often represented as twin snakes

Legba: first called in a service, he opens the gates to the spirit world, no one dares show themselves w/out permission of Legba, controller of the crossroads, a small, crooked, loveable old man

Kalfu: Petro twin of Legba, controls evil forces of the world, world would be better w/out this crossroads opened, respected but not much liked

Ghede: controls eternal crossroads, crossing from life to death, symbol is the cross, controls access to other realm, also spirit of eroticism (which is beyond good and evil), when he mounts the individual is dressed in a black coat, top hat, and sun glasses, he is amused by individuals who deny the universal presence and need of eroticism

Ogoun: traditional warrior figure, mighty, powerful, more recently the crafty, powerful political leader, he gives strength thru prophecy and magic, he has many aspects to his character and comes to people in many guises, when he mounts the dress is red, w/a machete, drinking and setting on fire rum

Erzulie: loa of beauty and love, she is greatly loved, she is the loa of dreams and aspirations, however the world is too much for her and she always ends up weeping, she suffers the burden of the worlds sorrows, she's associated w/Mary

Gran Bwa: protector of wildlife, lives deep in the forest where vegetation is wild,

Loco: spirit of vegetation, guardian of sanctuaries and associated with trees, knowledge of herbs, healing properties of vegetation, known for his good judgment called on when there is conflict

Possession: is a large part of Vodou ritual. Being a Vodoun involves "serving the spirits" the Loa must be properly cared for with rituals, food, drink, and music. Possession is the presence of the divine. When the Loa arrive they are said to "mount their horse" (the devotee that they possess) and the Loa's spirit displaces the *head* of the devotee. The possessed individual then *becomes* the spirit of the Loa. They take on the character and "body" of the spirit. The walk and talk and interact in the spirit and body of the Loa that has possessed them. The possessed individual then interacts with the other worshippers who are present and gives advice and answers their questions.

Key questions in regards to possession include: What really happens during possession? Is possession a form of psychosis? Is it true that those that are possessed remember nothing of what happened while they were possessed? Is it true that when someone is possessed that they will not come to harm (i.e. handling knives, fire, etc.)?

Hungan (priests) & Mambo (priestesses): have their own followers. They may operate out of a temple or their home (many of the sites of worship are outdoors in Haiti). The Mambo and Hungan act as counselors, protectors, healers and intermediaries for the presence of the Loa.

Healing: is a major focus of Vodou. The healing of the mind, body, and relationships is a central goal of Vodou ceremonies. Followers of Vodou believe that the condition of the spirit determines the condition of the body. Bad health arises from an imbalance in the individual. For minor ailments the Mambo or Hungan will treat the symptoms with herbs and folk remedies. For major ailments the ill individual will be referred to a professional healer. But they will also be treated by the Mambo or Hungan because illness arises from a lack of harmony in the individual and you can't just treat the source, you need to treat the symptoms. Good health is seen as a service to the gods.

Code of Ethics: the following are just some of the behaviors that violate the ethical code in Vodou

- Excessive material advancement at expense of family, keep resources in family
- Displaying lack of respect for one's fellows
- Denigrating vodoun society
- Stealing another man's wife
- Spreading loose talk that slanders, harms others
- Harming member's of ones family
- Any act which unjustly prevents another from working or maintaining their land

Vodou: a syncretic religion, combining of Western African animistic religions and Catholicism, which originated in Haiti (there are other versions of the merging of Catholicism and West African religions in Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica, etc.). Vodou means "spirit."

History: Enslaved West Africans brought their various religious beliefs with them (although they were generally threatened with death if they continued to practice their faith). In Haiti the French colonizers and enslavers imposed Catholicism on those they enslaved.

West African Roots: The Yoruba Peoples of Benin were one of the primary influencers of Vodou although other beliefs and groups intermingled in Haiti.

In the Yoruba Religion there is one creator God, who created universe and then withdrew from daily human affairs. **Secondary divinities** (Orisha) were created by God for humans. Humans go to the orisha to seek protection, guidance, and blessings from spirits, each individual has their special spirit(s). There are hundreds to thousands of spirits and they all embody different aspects of the natural world, and the work that the Yoruba were involved in. Spirits come from the ancestors.

A Key belief is that humans must constantly work to maintain a harmonious relationship w/spirits to be able to prosper, ritual used to foster positive relations. Traditionally rituals take place to mark important transitions in an individual's life as well as to mark changes in the natural world. Rituals include the setting up of alters dedicated to spirits, prayer, offerings, sacrifice (animal), possession, and healing. Within Vodou there is an animistic belief in that all things are seen as having a spirit or soul and this spirit can leave the body.

Catholicism is a Christian religion. From their emic perspective they are the "true, universal" Christian faith. Their beliefs come from doctrine formulated by theologians and based on their interpretation of the bible (generally figurative interpretations). They see their faith as offering a continuous transmission of faith from Jesus to the current Pope

Veneration of saints; prayer, ritual (feast days) focused on thousands of saints for huge diversity of areas connected with human concerns; travel, healing, agriculture, etc. "saints pray with them." **Rituals:** attendance at Mass every Sunday, Jesus physically present in bread & wine, transubstantiation, Prayer, rosary, sacraments (Eucharist, baptism, etc)

Syncretism: merging or combining of two different faiths, Catholicism has commonly combined with indigenous beliefs during colonization, missionization

- Cult of Saints, Rituals (feast days), overlaid onto indigenous spirits and rituals
- Overlaying of Catholic saints onto African spirits allowed Africans enslaved to continue to practice their faith and access their "gods/goddesses"
- Rituals and symbols associated w/Catholics allow many Haitians to state they are both "Vodou and Catholic" "Haiti 90% Catholic, 100% Vodou"

A Partial List of the Vodou Pantheon of Spirits

LEGBA: is the first called in a service, so that he can open the gates to the spirit world, enabling communication with other loa. He controls the crossing over from one world to the other, and is known to hold the "key of the spiritual world" (identified with St. Peter). He is a small crooked lovable old man who uses a small pipe with little tobacco, he has sores on his body and when he mounts someone the person's limbs are twisted and horrible to see.

KALFU (CARREFOUR): Legba's twined, Petro opposite, who also controls the crossroads. If it not for him the world would be more rational, better place. He allows the crossing of bad luck, deliberate destruction, misfortune, injustice. Kalfu controls the in-between points of the crossroads, the off-center points. When Kalfu mounts a person everyone at the service stops speaking because he allows evil loa to come to the ceremony. Some people claim he is a demon but he denies this.

GHEDE: controls the eternal crossroad which everyone must someday pass over--the crossing from life to death, his symbol is the cross upon a tomb. Ghede is to the underworld or afterlife what Legba is to life--he who controls access. Ghede is also the spirit of eroticism, which is beyond good and evil since it is inevitable. Ghede is amused by the universal presence of eroticism and humans' constant need to pretend that it is other than what it is. When Ghede mounts someone he often singles out people who pretend to be aloof from eroticism. He ridicules them, embarrasses them, exposes them (in more ways than one). He is especially hard on whites since they often have the puritanical sexual attitudes of western culture. He is enamored of women, makes constant use of obscene words and songs, and performs lude dances. When someone is mounted by Ghede and dressed in black coat, top hat and sun glasses, Ghede performs the banda dance, a gyrating dance in which one imitates the movements of copulation. Ghede is a clown, an interrupter, a coarse fellow. He is much loved because his appearance always brings laughter and joy, singing and dancing, though much of it is lude. He is neither good nor evil, but is amused by humans and that's why he jokes around so much. Also called *BARON SAMEDI*, in this aspect he is *DEATH*, the keeper of the cemetery. Anyone who would seek contact with the dead must first solicit Ghede/Baron Samedi in the same way that Legba is contacted to cross over to the spirit world. He is the loa of death and resurrection. He decides whether to accept the sick person into the dead or allow them to recover.

DUMBALLAH (DUMBALLAH WEDO, DUMBALLA): Known as the serpent, he is one of the most popular loa. Dumballah is benevolent, innocent, a loving father. He doesn't communicate well, as though his wisdom were too aloof for us. Dumballah is the snake and is rather uncommunicative, but a loving quiet presence. He does not communicate exact messages, but seems to radiate a comforting presence which sends a general spirit of optimism into all people present. He and his wife, Aida-Wedo, are often shown as two snakes. People possessed by him dart their tongues in and out, slither along the ground, and climb trees, or roof beams, falling like a boa. He is known to whistle because he has no speech, and he is the bringer of rain, a necessity for good crops.

OGOUN: Ogoun is the traditional warrior figure in Dahomean religion., he is a crafty and powerful political leader. This political warrior points to where struggle is in modern Haiti. He gives strength through prophecy and magic. It is Ogoun who is said to have planted the idea, led and given power to the slaves for the revolution and consequent freedom of 1804. He is called now to help people obtain a government more responsible to their needs.

ERZULIE: the loa of beauty, the loa who is so uniquely human since she is the differentiating force between human and all other creation. She is the ability to conceptualize, to dream, and the artistic ability to create. She is the most beautiful and sensuous lady in the Voodoo pantheon, respected and wealthy; wears her hair long; is jealous and requires her lovers to dedicate a room for her ritual lovemaking. Erzulie is not a loa of elemental forces, but of ideal dreams, hopes and aspirations. As such she is the most loved loa of all. Voodoo does not have a woman as loa of fertility. Fertility is regarded as a unified principle, equally held by male and female forces. Thus Dumballah is united to his Ayida. the visit of Erzulie is never fully satisfying. In the end she always begins to weep. The world is just too much for her. At first people try to comfort her with more delicate food or drink or other gifts, but her tears continue to flow. It is this tearful and sad side of her that allows the women to accept her in her haughty ways. She is, in the end, one who suffers the burden of the world's sorrows

GRAN BWA: Gran Bwa lives in the deep forest where the vegetation is wild. He is the protector of wildlife, and doesn't like to be seen. He eats fruits and vegetables all day in the woods and when called in a ceremony, he is usually not hungry but the people always have food for him anyway. He is the loa who must be called upon before one is ordained into Voodoo priesthood.

LOKO: (Loco) : He is the spirit of vegetation, the guardian of sanctuaries and is associated with trees. Loco has an extensive knowledge of the pharmaceutical uses of herbs. It is said that houngans and mambos receive their knowledge from him. He gives healing properties to leaves, and is the loa of healing and patron of the herb doctors who always invoke him before undertaking a treatment. Offerings to Loko are placed in straw bags which are then hung in trees' branches. He is known for his good judgment, and often during conflicts he is called in to be judge. He has an intolerance of injustice, and it has been said that he transforms into the wind and listens to people without them knowing he is there.

SIMBA: (Simbi, Simbe, Simbi Andezo) : He is the guardian of the fountains and marshes and cannot live without the freshness of water. His Voodoo rituals are held near springs. He is a knowledgeable loa because he spends a lot of time learning about the nature of illnesses of supernatural origin and how to treat them. As part of Ogoun's army he is the chief of the coast guard and goes wherever he pleases. He is the Petro loa of the coast; one of the most respected members of the Petro family. But, because of his gentle nature, he also belongs to the Rada family. Sometimes when neglected by serviteurs and gnawed by hunger, he can be cruel. He lives in springs and rivers. Children who go to fetch water at springs run the risk--particularly if they are fair-skinned--of being kidnapped to work for him under the water for a few years, gifting them with second sight for their trouble.

SIREN AND WHALE: These two loa are marine divinities, so closely linked that they are always worshipped together and celebrated in the same songs. Some people say the Whale is the mother of the Siren, others that he is her husband; others say the names are used for one and the same loa. Popular opinion says the Siren is married to Agwe. When Siren turns up in a sanctuary, the person possessed by her appears simply in the role of a young coquette most careful of her looks, and speaking in French, often offending the peasant serviteurs. Both the Siren and the Whale are viewed as "upper class."

Serpent Handling as Sacrament

This article describes Pentecostal Christians in the American South. We will be viewing a video of their practices and also engage in classroom discussion on this topic. I have started these notes with some general information on Christianity and some specific information about Pentecostal sects as well as snake handlers as a subset of a Pentecostal faith. At the end of these notes there is a group assignment which we will conduct in class.

Christianity: is a monotheistic belief system, the bible is the basis of the belief system, followers adhere to the teachings of Jesus.

- **Trinity**- is an essential part of Christian doctrine, the belief that one God exists in three forms; the father, the son and the holy ghost
- **Eucharist**- is an essential rite of communion in most Christian churches. Generally bread and wine are consecrated by minister and consumed by the congregation. The Eucharist commemorates the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples.
- **Communion** symbolizes and effects the union of the faithful with Christ. The saving action of Jesus is made known through the Eucharist and baptism (individual is sprinkled or immersed in water as initiation rite, purification rite).

Christian Sects: there are thousands of Christian sects that have existed over time and space. Christianity started as a sect of Judaism. Since its inception, as with most all major religions there have been major debates as to what constitutes the doctrine and practice of Christianity.

- Split of East and West churches 1000AD
- Split into Catholic and Protestant churches 1500AD
- Division between figurative and literalist sects (Ongoing over time and place)
 - **Figurative** (Catholics, Episcopal)- Bible is series of stories, parables, and doctrines to be interpreted as guidance to live a moral life
 - **Literal** (Baptists)- Bible is the literal, inerrant truth handed down from God. All stories are to be taken as literally true.

Christian/Pentecostal “Holiness movement”

“Pentecostalism is not a denomination or a creed but a movement, a cluster of religious practices and attitudes that transcends ecclesiastical boundaries”

Pentecostal Churches can be traced to the early 1900’s in the USA. Two seminal events, in which congregations in Topeka, Kansas and Los Angeles began speaking in tongues, singing, dancing, entering trancelike spirit possession, and healing by laying on hands can be seen as the start of this form of Christianity.

In Pentecostal churches the emphasis is on experiencing the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by speaking in tongues, and healing. There are many different sects of Pentecostals, some Catholic, some Protestant, most of them leaning towards literal interpretations of the bible. These churches tend to focus on testimony and testifying (about their beliefs and their experiences with the Holy Spirit), and experiencing the divine presence of the Holy Spirit in worship service. They tend to emphasize ecstatic personal religious experience unmediated by authoritarian leadership, focus on wellness of community, and working to bring forth Christ’s Second Coming

Serpent (Snake) Handlers- Signs Following Movement

Serpent handling is said to have begun with George Hensley, the “father of snake handling,” in 1908. The story goes that Hensley was preaching Mark 16, when a man dropped a opened box of rattlesnakes in front of him, and he picked up some of the snakes, and kept on preaching. The practice then spread to different areas of the American South.

And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
Mark 16:15-18 AV

The passage above is marked by serpent handling sects as key to the way that they practice their faith. They are generally literalists in regards to the bible and take the text above as directions as to how they should ritualize their faith, with the handling of snakes and the drinking of poison.

Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

**Fall 2009
Assignments**

Professor K. Markley

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Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

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First Day True/False Survey

(This survey is an introduction to the class, it will not be graded)

1. Social scientists always consider the use of magic to be illogical and irrational because it only works sometimes.
2. Witchcraft beliefs are common around the world. Witches are individuals who are believed to have an innate power to affect other individuals and the world around them.
3. The witchcraft persecutions in Europe were a means by which the state and church got rid of female midwives and instituted a male dominated, medical profession.
4. All cultures around the world have a belief in a supernatural being or beings or spirits. This is proof that God exists.
5. Functional theorists state that one of the functions of supernatural beliefs is that these beliefs help reduce our anxieties and give us an increased sense of control.
6. The oldest evidence for supernatural beliefs is found in the Egypt and the artifacts are dated to around 3100 BC.
7. Wiccans believe in a Goddess and can trace their religion back through time to the Upper Paleolithic Era (30,000 years ago).
8. Altered states of consciousness are a common means to connect with the supernatural in many religions. Individuals alter their state of consciousness with the use of drugs, chanting, singing, dancing, meditating, and prayer and then connect with the spiritual realm.
9. Over time there have been a wide variety of hypothesis as to the role that shamans play in traditional societies. They have been labeled *agents of the devil*, *imposters*, *magicians*, *psychotics*, and more recently *doctors and psychologists*. A historical review of the literature on shamans shows that the writings often reveal more about the observers than about the observed.
10. Science can prove the existence of god.
11. When people engage in intensive meditation or prayer PET scans show that when they claim to have become one with God, Allah, or Buddha (depending on the cultural context) neurons in their brain actually disconnect from the differentiation area (which allows us to experience ourselves as separate from the outside world).
12. Vodou believers are terrified of zombies and most of their rituals involve working to protect themselves from the walking dead.
13. Religious specialists agree that Vodou is not a religion, it is a cult.
14. Studies looking at the relationship between prayer and healing show that if someone is prayed for they will get well at a faster rate than individuals who are not prayed for.
15. Taboo's are only found in traditional cultures which have little to no understanding of science.
16. The anthropological study of religion reveals that religions can be categorized from the most primitive and basic to the most evolved and civilized.
17. All anthropologists study religion using the scientific approach.
18. All social scientists see supernatural beliefs as irrational because they involve a belief in something that can only be validated with faith.
19. Anthropology is the holistic study of humans, and as such anthropologists study everything including; biology, economics, language, history, politics, and religion.
20. Religion is a tool that has been historically used by the elites of society to control the masses.

Positionality Assignment

Name _____

The goal of this paper is twofold. One, to give you a context to reflect on your beliefs and how they were formed. Two to give me some insight into the beliefs and background of my students. Please take the time to answer each question thoughtfully and completely.

1. Were you raised in a religious household? How flexible or rigid was your religious upbringing? If you were not raised within a religious context what were you taught about belief systems?

2. How would you describe your current status in regards to religious and supernatural beliefs? Are you a religious believer and/or practitioner? Do you consider yourself- religious, spiritual, agnostic, atheistic? Do you go to church? Engage in rituals? Please share a few sentences in regards to your current philosophical/religious beliefs and practices.

3. What is your interest and/or goals for this class? Is the goal personal exploration? If so what questions, and/or areas are you interested in? Are you an anthro major? Are you just fulfilling a class credit?

For the following statements circle which answer is most accurate for you:

4. In regards to the study of religious beliefs and practices (such as Vodou, Wicca, Shamanism, Witchcraft, etc) I will likely have:
 - A. a hard time being objective and non-judgmental
 - B. no problem being objective and open-minded
 - C. depending on the subject matter it may be more or less difficult for me to be objective
5. I have strong biases in regards to certain beliefs and practices. True/False
6. The religions that I have the most problem being objective with include: _____

7. Lastly, all students in this class are expected to work at being culturally relative as we engage in the anthropological study of religion and supernatural beliefs and practices. Please print and sign your name below indicating that you; agree to work at being objective and culturally relative in class during this semester. Keep in mind that there are students from all sorts of different backgrounds and with widely different beliefs in this class. It is essential that everyone work to be respectful in their questions and observations in class discussion so that we can all have an interesting and fulfilling exploration into the anthropological study of the supernatural.

Name (print) _____ Name (sign) _____

Experiential Assignments – Worth up to 10 points each

See your class schedule for the due dates for these assignments. All assignments must be **TYPED**, approximately ½ to 1 page long. At the top put your name and the title of the assignment. You will get full credit if you work to answer each question completely and thoughtfully. You will get fewer points for brief, incomplete answers. **No late papers are accepted.** You get to drop one of these assignments (you chose which one).

Symbol Assignment

Interview 4 people who are spiritual and/or religious and ask them if they have a symbol that is sacred or important to them. Do they have a symbol that reflects and/or reinforces their belief system? Ask them to briefly describe the symbol and what it means to them. Do they wear this symbol, carry it with them? If they do, what does it mean to them when they wear or carry this symbol? Lastly, interview yourself and ask the questions above. Your paper should include an overview of your interviews with everyone, including yourself. It should also include a brief analysis of the findings in your interview in relationship to the section in your notes on symbols (read the notes on symbols before starting this assignment). For instance, how do the symbols function in the lives of the individuals you talked to? Do several of them have the same symbol but have different meanings attributed to it?

Personal “Magic”

Interview 4 people and yourself (for a total of 5 interviews) and ask the following questions; 1) Do you have a talisman or sacred object that you keep with you (on your person and/or in your car) for protection or luck? 2) Why do you carry this object around with you? What does it do for you? 3) What is the history of this object? How did it get to be an important object for you? 4) Do you think your object works to protect you and/or bring you luck? 5) Do you think carrying around a sacred or magical object is rational or logical? Why or why not? For your paper write up a synopsis of the answers to the above interview questions.

Altered State Assignment

For this assignment you are going to work at attaining an altered state of consciousness (without the use of drugs) for a brief period of time. Altered states of consciousness have been sought out and attained throughout human history for a wide variety of goals. In this assignment you need to select a means to alter your consciousness- drumming, singing, dancing, chanting, meditation, or prayer are all good methods and come up with a stated intention or goal for the period of time you are in an altered state. Your goal can be anything from working to relax and unwind to finding a way to resolve a conflict with a friend or family member. Set up everything ahead of time, the implements you need (i.e. drum, rattle, a quiet, private space), be clear and focused with your intention and then begin. Set an alarm clock for 20 minutes. At the end of the 20 minutes write a brief summary of what you did and how it went. Your paper should include the following; What was your initial reaction to this assignment? Was the assignment easy or hard? What was your intention or goal with this assignment, How successful were you? Do you work to alter your consciousness regularly using meditation, drums, music, dance, prayer, etc?

What is a Witch?

Conduct 5 interviews (interview 4 people and make yourself the 5th interviewee). Ask each person the following questions. 1. When you hear the word witch what comes to mind? What is the picture that comes to mind when you hear the word witch? 2. What attributes do you connect with witches? (are they nice, mean, scary, good, evil, etc.). 3. Where have you learned about witches (school, movies, TV, books, etc.)? For your paper put together a synopsis of your interviews. If you want to include a picture of a witch that would be great.

Pagan Assignment: Today, most of us live in an urban environment in which our connection to nature and nature's seasons is fairly distant. For this exercise I want you to take some time to connect with the natural world and its cycles. You can choose to either go to a particular place and spend some time experiencing and reflecting on your chosen natural environment (park, beach, mountains, etc.) or you can choose to reflect on an aspect of the cycles of nature (moon's cycles, sun's cycles, etc.). As you engage in one of the exercises above take a few moments to reflect on your relationship to the natural world. Do you feel a special affinity to nature? Do you feel at home in nature? Do you feel separate and apart from the rest of the natural world? What type of natural environment are you drawn to (beach, forest, desert, etc.). What is your psychological and physical reaction to being in nature? Is there a particular season that you are drawn to? Are you animistic in your relationship with nature?

Voodoo Assignment: For this assignment you need to either make your own bocio/vodou doll or a gris gris bag and then write up the results. Keep in mind that within Vodou it is only appropriate to use these objects to aid you or someone you care about in a positive way (never to work to harm someone). Vodou dolls and gris gris bags are used to focus a person's intentions and energies for a specific goal- being successful in work, love or school, safe travel, good health, etc. (google vodou dolls or gris gris bags for additional ideas). Vodou dolls require that you create an "abstraction of a human figure." You can use any material you chose; wood, cloth, moss, etc (it is best to use materials that are indigenous to the area). The doll is "made up" with clothes and attributes to reflect the target of the "work." The use of personal items is common to "activate" the doll to enlist and aid of spiritual forces. The creation of the doll is a means to empower, reflect, and to seek assistance from spirits. Your intent in the creation of the doll must be clearly expressed.

Gris Gris Bag (gree gree): A gris gris bag can be a powerful talisman when made with the proper intent. It is said that if you take care of it will take care of you. Gris Gris bags are a phenomena primarily practiced in Louisiana. Vodou in some areas of Louisiana is called Hoodoo. Hoodoo is seen as more a compilation of superstitions and not as much like a religion as is Vodou. It is said that once a gris gris spell is cast, the "momentum slowly builds until it becomes an unstoppable force." The effects of gris gris bags are immediate, you should know that it is working within 24 hours. Once you have created your bag it is tied with black yarn, and anointed with oil. It should then be continuously worn by the individual. You should not let anyone else see inside the bag or touch it. The gris gris bag is a focusing tool, made to assist you in bringing about a desired event.

Vodou/Botcio doll-Gris Gris bag Paper: For your paper describe the process that you have gone through in this exercise. Did you do a Vodou Doll or Gris Gris bag? Was it hard or easy? What were your intentions? What did you do to create your artifact? Did it work to aid you in your goal(s)? Was this exercise a positive or negative experience?

Anthropology 107- Worksheet One

Name _____

(Questions from: Introduction to Anthropological Study of Religion, Terms and Concepts)

1. Why does Claude Levi-Straus say that the anthropological study of the supernatural is “good to think”?
2. What is the key criteria to the “best” anthropology in the study of the supernatural? Why is this so important?
3. What is outside the realm of anthropologies study of the supernatural?
4. Which fields of anthropology do you think an anthropologist can use to study religion?
5. Select two religions that you know of and compare at least two aspects of their beliefs, and/or rituals.
6. Do you think an anthropologist's informant's (in anthropological lingo an informant is a member of a culture an anthropologist is studying who gives them information about the culture) will likely be culturally relative or ethnocentric in the reporting of their own culture?
7. What are the key differences between cultural relativity and moral relativity?
8. True or False: Culture is best described as the food, holiday's, and clothing of a group of people.
9. The _____ perspective involves gaining “uncritical representations of reality shared by members of a given culture,”
10. The _____ perspective involves “comprehensive, explanatory representations of reality recognized by the scientific community.”
11. All knowledge that resides at the surface is _____, while knowledge that is under the surface is _____.
12. The _____ is what people say they do, while the _____ is what people are actually observed doing.

Anthropology 107- Worksheet Two

Name _____

(Questions from: Anthropology of Religion, History/Context of Anthropological studies, Anth Theory)

1. Anthropology developed in the context of a number of other developments in Western Europe. The _____ resulted in Western Europeans encountering peoples and cultures that were very different from their own. The observations brought back tended to be _____.

2. How did the Enlightenment affect the development of the anthropology of religion?

3. Why has Rousseau's views of traditional peoples been criticized (be specific in your answer)?

4. What is a key debate in regards to science and the study of humans? What is your opinion in regards to this debate?

5. True or False -A traditional culture can best be described as one in which the population is largely ignorant and illiterate.

6. List two key differences between traditional cultures and cultures that practice agriculture.

7. True/False: An anthropological description of "others" would be those people that are outside our group.

8. True/False: Anthropologists are always aware of their ethnocentrism.

9. True/False: Franz Boas, an early anthropologist, was aware of the ethnocentrism of his day.

10. True/False: The myth of the Noble Savages is prevalent today.

11. True/False: The nature/nurture debate is largely settled today. All anthropologists see human behaviors as biologically based.

12. True/False: The ability of natural selection to explain the change of life forms over time is the subject of much controversy in science and biology today.

13. True/False: Sociobiology is the subject of much controversy today.

14. True/False: For religious beliefs to have been *selected* for they must lead to reproductive success (fitness).

15. Come up with an alternative explanation as to how religions originated other than through natural selection.

Anthropology 107- Worksheet Three

Name _____

(Questions from: Anthropological Theory)

1. What are two key differences between natural selection and sociobiology?
2. Social Evolutionary Theory states that all cultures will _____ through a series of stages from savagery to _____ to civilization.
3. Is Social Evolutionary Theory accepted by anthropologists today? Is it accepted by the people in the general public today? (If your answer is yes, can you come up with an example?)
4. The criteria used to delineate between the savage, barbarian, and civilized stage is clearly _____
5. According to social evolutionary theory, the savage stage has _____ as the basis of its beliefs, the barbarism stage has _____ types of beliefs system and those in the civilized stage have _____ types of beliefs
6. True/False: The concept of psychic unity and the belief that some peoples have a pre-logical mentality is compatible.
7. The idea that all cultures will eventually progress and attain civilization best goes along with- the concept of psychic unity or the idea of a pre-logical mentality?
8. Historical Particularism states that each culture must be studied _____
9. True/False: Historical Particularism states that once a particular phenomena has been studied in depth (i.e. shamanism) in one culture the understandings can be extrapolated and generalized to other cultures of a similar kind.
10. The material conditions under which a culture has developed (i.e. access to resources such as water, arable land, etc.) have _____ effect on the development of the culture being studied.
11. True/False- The functionalist perspective compares the wildly different cultural beliefs and practices of different cultures.
12. The functionalist approach states that religion works to give people an increased sense of control and is a means to reduce their anxiety. Give one example of how this would work in a religion that you know of:
13. When a scientific framework is used to study humans the questions include looking at _____
14. Does Marvin Harris study human beliefs and actions from a scientific or humanistic perspective? Does he use the emic or etic perspective?
15. What theoretical orientation did Harris develop?
16. Cultural Materialism states that the bottom layer _____ affects and shapes the middle layer _____ and this affects and shapes the top layer _____.
17. Does Clifford Geertz study human beliefs and actions from a scientific or humanistic perspective? What does Geertz see as important in the study of religion?

Anthropology 107- Worksheet Four
(Questions from: Early Theories of Religion)

Name _____

1. E.B. Tylor wrote _____ in 1871. In his book Tylor formulated two basic cultural laws. One, he stated that all humans shared a _____
Two, he saw all human cultures as _____ over time.
2. True/False- Animistic beliefs state humans are the only beings that have a soul or life force.
3. True/False- Tylor saw polytheism as the most advanced form of religious belief
4. True/False- Tylor and Frazer saw religion as originating to satisfy human's emotional needs.
5. True/False- Frazer saw magic, religion and science as similar means by which humans worked to rationally understand and cope with their world.
6. True/False- Tylor and Frazer saw religion as arising out of individual's efforts to rationally understand and cope with their world.
7. Briefly state what would constitute an emotional explanation for the origin of religion.
8. True/False- Marx saw religion as arising out of individual's efforts to rationally understand and cope with their world.
9. True/False- Freud saw religious beliefs as necessary for an individual to be healthy and stable.
10. True/False- Karl Marx's views of religion are dramatically different from Marvin Harris's views of religion.
11. How does a rational explanation for the origin of religion work?
12. True/False- Anthropologists always work to determine whether or not a cultures religion is true or fake.
13. Select (or find) a definition or quote in regards to religion which most resonates with you.
14. Come up with at least one question in regards to religion which most interests you.

Worksheet 5: Taboos, Symbol, Myth, and Ritual

Name _____

(Questions from; Taboo, Symbol, Myth, Ritual and Our Lady of Guadalupe)

Mark each statement as True or False**Taboos**

1. Mary Douglas agrees with Marvin Harris in regards to taboos. All taboos arise out of particular material and environmental circumstances.
2. Douglas states that all cultures have taboos
3. According to Mary Douglass taboos can best be described as rules of the game.
4. Douglas believes that a world without taboos would be so overwhelming we would likely be unable to function.
5. Taboos mark political realities. An example is a lower ranking individual having to bow down and avert their eyes in front of a political leader.
6. Taboos are irrational but common in human societies.

Symbols

1. Within the same culture all people view symbols in the same way. For instance in the USA everyone sees the American flag as representing freedom and democracy.
2. Clifford Geertz sees symbols as integral to religion because symbols instill a sense of reverence and awe in believers.
3. Per Geertz religious symbols give us an understanding of the general order of the world. Religious symbols reflect our worldview.
4. Firth states that symbols are always used reveal who and what we are.
5. The Christian cross is a symbol that means the same thing to all Christians.

Ritual

1. All anthropologists see rituals as working to reduce anxiety in humans and to give them an increased sense of control.
2. Rituals decrease our anxiety. Whenever anyone prays, a ritual event, their anxiety is lessened.
3. Rituals cause anxiety. Whenever anyone engages in a ritual, there is tremendous concern that it be done properly.
4. The liminal stage in rites of passage is a betwixt and between stage.
5. Being a college student could be an example of the liminal stage (if we view getting a college degree as a rite of passage)
6. Ritual is the enactment of myth.

Myth

1. Myths are always just stories and are never true.
2. All human groups have myths. Myths seem to be essential to human lives.
3. Hero and trickster myths are uncommon in human cultures
4. Myths are always interpreted in the same way by everyone in the culture.
5. In contemporary cultures myths are often told through movies.

Worksheet 5 continued

Our Lady of Guadalupe

1. There is one agreed upon story in regards to how Our Lady of Guadalupe became the Patron Saint of Mexico.
2. The appearance of Mary on Juan Diego's cloak is a miracle that has been verified by science.
3. The appearance of Mary at the site of the Aztec Goddess Tonantzin's shrine was clearly a coincidence.
4. All of those who worship Our Lady of Guadalupe accept as truth that Juan Diego experienced a visitation or miracle in which Guadalupe appeared to him at Tonantzin's shrine.
5. As a symbol, Guadalupe means the same thing to all Mexicans, she is their mother figure.
6. As a symbol, Guadalupe clearly belongs to the Catholic Church and they should have the power over how she is represented in art and paintings.
7. As a symbol, Guadalupe clearly belongs to the people, and they should have the right to represent her however they see her.

Study Guide and Questions for Marvin Harris: *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*

Once you have completed each chapter you should be able to answer the questions below. Your class schedule has the dates for each reading assignment and any writing assignments. Make sure you are ready to discuss the questions for each chapter on the assigned dates in the class schedule. These questions will also be used as the basis for quiz and exam questions.

Preface and Prologue

1. Does Harris see human's lifestyle choices as rational or irrational?
2. Does this mean that Harris thinks all humans are rational? That all cultural beliefs and practices are rational?
3. What is the goal of this book?
4. What is a "spiritualized" explanation? What is Harris's view of spiritualized explanations?
5. Does Harris focus on emic or etic perspectives in working to answer his questions?
6. What are the three things that Harris sees human's everyday consciousness as filled with?
7. What year did Harris write this book? What was the context of that timeframe?

Mother Cow

1. According to Harris why do the Hindu's have a taboo on the eating of beef (what is his etic analysis and perspective)?
2. According to Harris how does the bottom level in his theory of cultural materialism (the economic mode of production) affect the top level (ideologies and beliefs) in the situation of the Hindu's taboo on the eating of beef? (Hint: you will need to read about Harris and Cultural Materialism in your Notes Packet and use critical reasoning skills to answer the question).
3. According to Harris what is one of "our" (westerner's) favorite sacred cows (Hint this question requires that you carefully read Harris's conclusion on this topic and it requires that you know what the term "sacred cow" means in mainstream American culture)
4. What do cows symbolize to Hindus (an emic perspective)?
5. Does Harris see India as more efficient or less efficient than the USA in terms of energy costs?
6. In your opinion is the USA or India more rational in their use of cows?
7. What are the key differences between Harris's view of taboos and Mary Douglas's view of taboos?

Pig Lovers and Pig Haters

1. As regards "efficiency" and cleanliness how do pigs compare to other animals?
2. What is a naturalistic explanation as to why pigs are taboo?
3. What is a mystical explanation as to why pigs are taboo?
4. What is Harris's explanation as to why pigs are taboo as a food source in some groups?
5. What is Harris's explanation as to why pigs are "loved" as a food source in some groups?
6. What role does Cultural Materialism play in Harris's analysis of pigs as taboo?

Primitive War

1. What are the common explanations for primitive warfare?
2. What does Harris state about explanations for warfare (is primitive warfare capricious? Or is it rationally thought out?)?
3. Are religious beliefs a cause for warfare in Harris's opinion? In your opinion?

Savage Male

1. According to Harris what is the driving force of human behavior, nature or nurture? Is biology destiny?

Potlatch

1. What is Ruth Benedict's explanation for the practice of "potlatch"?
2. What is Marvin Harris's explanation for the practice of "potlatch"?
3. What is the key difference between their explanations?

Phantom Cargo

1. What is a "cargo cult"?
2. What role did missionaries play in the formation of cargo cults? Was this process deliberate or inadvertent?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Harris's statement that "the missionaries knew that if the rewards for Christian obedience were presented in a wholly spiritual and otherworldly sense the natives would either disbelieve them or lose interest and move on to someone else's church"?
4. According to Harris what was the "true" secret of the cargo cults?

Messiahs

1. What was Harris's answer as to "how could a religion so unworldly, devoted to peace, and love arise from material conditions"?
2. Do you agree or disagree with Harris when he states that all people believe they need divine intervention (assistance) to complete their objectives (to be free, etc.)?
3. What was the relationship between the secular and the sacred in Jewish society (address politics, and economics)?
4. Was Jesus (as a messiah) unique in his day?
5. Was the "Jewish military messianic" lifestyle irrational? What were the material conditions that gave rise to the Jewish military messianic lifestyle?

The Secret of the Prince of Peace

1. According to Harris was Jesus a peaceful messiah? What is his data and reasoning?
2. What material conditions gave rise to this construction of Jesus as a peaceful messiah?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Harris when he states "we can be sure as to when Jesus spoke but we can't be sure as to what he said" What data and reasoning does Harris use to make this statement? What data and reasoning do you have to agree or disagree with Harris's statement?
4. What is the meaning of the statement "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesars and unto God that which is God's"?
5. Was John the Baptist executed for his religious beliefs or his political actions?
6. Was Jesus crucified for his religious beliefs or his political actions?
7. What does an anthropological, holistic view encompass? How has a holistic view been used by Marvin Harris in analyzing the nature of Jesus as a messiah?

Broomsticks and Sabbats

1. How many witches does Harris state were convicted and burned for witchcraft?
2. What is the difference between fantastic accusations against witches and mundane accusations against witches?
3. Riddle one: Why did anyone believe that witches fly through the air on broomsticks? What answers are given? What is your opinion?
4. What was the practical result of the use of torture against witches? Does Harris see the use of torture as a minor (albeit unpleasant) aspect of witchcraft inquiries? Who did the church first target for torture and why were they targeted?
5. What does the Canon Episcopi state in regards to a belief in witches? In this timeframe (1000A.D. till 1480A.D.) what was done to an individual who was thought by their community to be a witch?
6. What was the context in which the Canon Episcopi was overturned (what was happening in the societies of Europe at that time, especially in relationship to the church)?
7. What was the Hammer of Witches (otherwise known as the Malleus Maleficarum) and how was it used?
8. State several features or components of the witch-hunting system that Harris talks about
9. What is Michael Harner's view in regards to the broomstick flights of witches (does it occur, how or why does it occur)?

The Great Witch Craze

1. According to Harris who was responsible for the witchcraze and why did they do it?
2. State four major changes that were occurring in Europe with the passing of feudalism and the emergence of national monarchies?
3. List at least one messianic individual and/or movement during this timeframe.
4. Who was Luther (Martin Luther) and what were his beliefs about what was happening in his time? What were his beliefs regarding witches?
5. To believe that the witch craze was a form of social protest what would you have to believe per Harris (be specific)?
6. Does Harris believe there were witches in Medieval Europe?
7. The "ideal is that the Inquisition was devoted to the suppression of witch heresy. What is the "real" per Harris? What was the "function" of the witchcraft persecutions according to Harris?
8. Do you agree or disagree with Harris's statement in regards to the witchcraft persecutions? He states that the witch craze was an integral part of the defense of the institutional structure, and that the witch craze was not an example of an institutional structure found wanting.
9. List one similarity and one difference between the witch craze and military messianism.

Return of the Witch

1. What groups does Harris list when he talks about the return of the witch or counter-culture?
2. What are the characteristics of counter-culture groups according to Harris?
3. According to Harris what is considered bad or negative by the counter-culture groups?
4. What is the only thing that counter-culture will not do in regards to consciousness?
5. Is Harris positive or negative about Carlos Castaneda and New Age shamanism (be specific)? What is his reasoning for his opinion? Do you agree or disagree with him?
6. Harris accuses counter-culture of worshipping of the "noble savage." Do you agree or disagree with him?
7. Does Harris believe that people can; 1) change their consciousness? 2) change their lives and society through changing their consciousness?
8. What famous saying is Harris echoing when he states "counter culture is popular with affluent society because it postpones the development of a rational set of political commitments."

Epilogue

1. What does Harris mean by the statement "if the witch is here, can the savior be far behind"?
2. Is the disdain of reason and science a problem in our society?
3. Harris states that the Vietnam War went on because "our consciousness was mystified by symbols of patriotism, dreams of glory, unyielding pride and visions of empire...we were stoned with visions of our own ineffable majesty" Do you agree or disagree?
4. Will witches and messiahs will be our lot as a species? Why or why not?
5. What is the only thing that human's haven't tried according to Harris?

Magic Worksheet

Name _____

(Questions from Magic notes)

1. True/False: Magic can easily be clearly and distinctly differentiated from science.
2. True/False: The differences between magic and prayer are clear cut and definite.
3. True/False: In the West, the hierarchy of knowledge generally places science at the top

Questions from the article “Rational Mastery by Man of His Surroundings”

4. What is Levi-Bruhl's view of “primitive man” and their ability to reason?
5. The statement “for minds thus oriented there is no fact purely physical” can best be connected with: a) a scientific worldview, b) a magical worldview.
6. What is Malinowski's first question and what is his conclusion?
7. What is Malinowski's second question and what is his conclusion?
8. What is Malinowski's view of the data that is available to aid in answering the above questions?
9. According to Malinowski what is the natives (the Trobriand Islanders) view of the role that magic plays in having healthy gardens?
10. Does Malinowski think the natives attribute healthy gardens to their use of magic?
11. How do the natives use magic? (be specific)
12. What are the two clear cut conditions that the natives know about in regards to successful gardening?
13. True/False: The natives use magic to deal with both of the conditions mentioned above
14. Why is magic not used in lagoon fishing? Why is magic essential for open-sea fishing?
15. In comparing the views of sorcery in relationship to health and illness. Who generally attributes ill health to sorcery? Who generally attributes ill health to natural causes?

Magic Worksheet- Page Two (STAPLE YOUR PAPER)

16. What is the key difference between the data that Malinowski used to formulate his opinions in regards to “primitive” people’s mentality and the data that Rousseau used?

17. Do you think Malinowski is likely accurate and objective in his final conclusion in regards to “primitive” people’s and science? Why or why not?

Questions from Baseball Magic

18. What does Wade Boggs do to control his uncertainty in regards to his performance in baseball games?

19. The author states that some people turn to magic in situations of _____, when they believe they have _____ over the success of their activities and the outcome is _____.

20. According to Gmelch, magic is a human attempt to _____ order and _____ on an otherwise _____ situation.

21. How is the use of magic irrational?

22. How is the use of magic rational?

23. Pitching and Hitting are comparable to the Trobriand Islanders _____ fishing and fielding is comparable to their _____ fishing.

24. Rituals used by baseball players involve _____.

25. True/False: Rituals usually grow out of exceptionally bad performances.

26. Taboo’s are _____.

27. True/False: Taboo’s usually grow out of exceptionally great performances.

28. True/False: Fetishes are a rare and unusual thing for a human to carry around with them.

29. What does Skinner’s research throw light on?

30. In conclusion do Malinowski, and Gmelch (author of Baseball Magic) see magic as rational and effective or irrational and ineffective?

Sorcerer's and Wizards- Video Questions

Name _____

1. What is the first wizard or sorcerer you ever learned of? How similar or different are they to what you have learned about shamans?
2. To what degree does the environment play a role in people's myths? Think of all of the different types of environments (i.e. seasonal variation, equatorial regions, forests, deserts)?
3. What word would best describe the religious beliefs of shaman's; animistic, polytheistic, or monotheistic?
4. The video postulates that the first form of magic was hunting magic. How do they speculate that early shamans aided their community in hunting?
5. How would you categorize hunting magic in Frazer's typology of magic?
6. What is the economic mode of production among shamanistic groups (i.e. how do they work to get food to survive? (Foraging/hunting, horticulture, agriculture, industrialization?)
7. What type of social organization do shamanistic groups have? Are they egalitarian or hierarchal? Do they have full time specialists?
8. What type of ideologies and beliefs are typical of shamanistic groups?
9. What type of data could be used to discern when humans first developed religious or supernatural beliefs? How old do you think supernatural beliefs are for humans?
10. Why are we so captivated by magicians? What are the differences between secular and religious magicians?

Mentawa: The Tattooed People - Video Questions

Name_____

1. What is the significance and meaning of body decorations for the Mentawa? Can you think of any parallels to this practice in our culture?

2. What is the status of shamans in their community? Do they have more power or influence than other individuals in their community? Do shamans have a different standard of living than others in their community?

3. List a couple of differences between shamans and priests in regards to the status that they hold in their communities?

4. What is the purpose of baptism? What rituals are involved in baptism? Why do you think the baptism requires the sacrifice of animals by the Mentawa?

5. How does the shaman work to divine the future? What are some of the ways in which we work to divine the future in our culture? Can you think of at least one secular means of divining and one religious means of divining the future?

6. What is the belief of the Mentawa in regards to the soul of animals after they die? What actions do they take in relationship to their beliefs?

7. How did colonization affect the Mentawa's ability to practice their belief system? Do you think it is likely that colonization directly affected their indigenous beliefs?

Shaman of the Andes- Video Questions

Name_____

1. Taita Chura is a shaman who considers himself a believer of two different religious belief systems. What are these two different religions and how do they overlap? In what ways do you think they conflict?

2. How would you describe the beliefs of the Quechua in regards to luck? Is there anything that can be done to increase one's good luck and/or to rid oneself of bad luck? How similar or different is this in relationship to your beliefs in regards to luck?

3. What does the shaman do to work to diagnose and cure the young women? Would you call what he does a ritual? A performance? Medicine?

4. What aspects of this ritual do you think are effective in aiding to cure the young women and what steps do you think are superfluous? What aspects of his curing do you find difficult to deal with?

5. Does the young women being treated by Taita Chura belief that he will heal her? How different is her attitude compared to your attitude when you go to the doctor?

6. How is shamanic healing similar to western healing practices? How is it different?

Shaman & Shamanism Worksheet

Name _____

(What is a Shaman- Piers Vitebsky)

1. What does Piers Vitebsky mean when he states that shamans seem to be all things to all people (what is his data and reasoning to support this statement)?

2. The term shaman was originally used to describe religious specialists in Siberia. Shaman is now used to describe medicine men/women (religious specialists) around the world. Would Franz Boas see this generalization, of the term shaman, as valid or invalid? Why (what is his reasoning)?

3. It is not uncommon for individuals to try and ignore a shamanic calling (often experienced in persistent dreams, constant illness). Can you think of why someone might not want to be a shaman?

4. There is an ongoing debate in anthropology as to whether or not it is appropriate to use the term shaman to describe religious specialists around the world. Give one reason to support using the term shaman to diverse groups around the world and one reason against the labeling of shamanism with an "ism."

5. If you have an animistic worldview how would this affect the way in which you view and experience the world around you?

6. Give one example as to how shamanism can be a mystical religion and one example as to how it can be a practical religion.

7. True/False: The shamanic worldview starts with the assumption that our soul(s) can leave the body and wander around.
8. True/False: Many shamans see sleep and dreaming as a kind of temporary death
9. True/False: In a shamanic worldview is it seen as likely that our realm of existence is affected by spirits from other realms.
10. True/False: The fundamental technique of shamanic journeying is an uncontrolled trance state

Shamans Through Time Questions

Name _____

All of the following are True/False questions- Mark a T or F next to each statement

(Question from: Ministers of the Devil Who Learn About the Secrets of Nature)

1. The term "page" used in this article is synonymous with the term shaman
2. Clearly Thevet's (author) description as to how shamans live and are treated by their group is truthful and valid.
3. Thevet believes that the secrets of nature should be sought out and discerned
4. Shamans are clearly in league with the devil.
5. The context within which Thevet wrote about shamans was clearly a time which allowed for free and open expression of different viewpoints.

Questions from: Shamans Deserve Perpetual Labor for their Hocus-Pocus)

6. The context within which this article was written shows that shamans were viewed objectively and with an open mind by outsiders from other cultures.
7. It is clearly a fact that the shamans described in this article were engaged in hocus-pocus.

(Questions from: Seeking Contact with Spirits is Not Necessarily Shamanism)

8. The title of this article indicates that Franz Boas (author) believes that shamanism is what is practiced everywhere where people seek out contact with the spirits.
9. Boas would see it as appropriate to use the term shaman to describe religious specialists in all traditional cultures.
10. Disease is seen as being caused in two ways; as due to a material object in the body of the patient, or because the soul is absent from the body

(Questions from: Seeking Knowledge in the Solitude of Nature)

11. Shamans always seek knowledge through suffering.
12. True wisdom is gained in solitude, and suffering.
13. The knowledge of the shamans is freely shared with all members of the shamanic community
14. These people believe that evil is never present in places where people are happy.
15. This shaman cured in the typical way, by entering an altered state of consciousness and performing a wild and complicated ritual performance in front of the community
16. Rasmussen (the anthropologist interviewing the shaman) accepted everything the shaman said unquestioningly because anthropologists always accept emic perspectives with no question.
17. Clearly Rasmussen was completely objective in his research with the shaman.

(Questions from: !Kung Medicine Dance)

18. The stated purpose of the dance is to cure sickness and drive away evil.
19. A functionalist perspective would likely state that the purpose of the dance is to cure sickness and drive away evil (functionalists always agree with emic perspectives).
20. There is only one medicine man in each !Kung community.

(Questions from: I Found Myself Impaled on the Axis Mundi)

21. Barbara Myerhoff (the anthropologist in this article) crosses a clear line in anthropological fieldwork, she participates instead of just observing.
22. It would make sense to put this article under the title "The Observers Take Part"
23. Myerhoff found that she could only understand the shamanistic experience by using all of the tools that her Western education gave her; rationality, linear thinking, simplification, categorization, definition, and analysis.

(Questions from: Plant Teachers)

24. In his research Luna (the Columbian anthropologist and author of the article) was told by the shamans that plants will speak Spanish to those that listen carefully.
25. Having a positive, productive experience while taking the psychoactive plants requires following a special diet.
26. Jeremy Narby (Cosmic Serpent author and editor of the book from which these articles came) would state that it is nonsense that plants can teach shamans about their properties and uses.
27. It is clear that the science of plants is stronger than Western medicine/science

(Questions from: Shamans and Scientists)

28. In this article three molecular biologists traveled to Peru to interview shamans as to how plants can be teachers.
29. Jeremy Narby (author of this article) was the translator between the Western scientists and the shamans and so clearly all communication was objective with no ambiguity.
30. All of the scientists stated that their experience with ayahuasca was interesting but not truly helpful in their research.
31. The ayahuasca experience can be objectively experienced and it can easily be reproduced.
32. The intellectual property rights of Indigenous Peoples are always carefully protected by Western scientists and peoples.

For the section on Shamans and Shamanism you should be able to answer and explain the following:

1. If you had to explain shamans and shamanism to someone who knew nothing about shamans what would you say? Keep in mind;
 - their general belief system
 - the type of societies they operate in
 - the changeable perspectives that outsiders (Westerners) have had of shamans over time
 - what they do
 - how they do it
 - How one becomes a shaman
2. From class lecture and the articles on shamans make sure you understand the various perspectives that outsiders (Westerners) have had of shamans over time
3. Why is there such an interest in shamanism in the West today?

Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events by E.E. Evans-Pritchard – Questions

1. The Azande recognize witchcraft to be a _____ and this goes along with the anthropological definition of _____.
2. What do the Azande first rule out before they accept an event as due to witchcraft?
3. It is clear that witchcraft beliefs and accusations among the Azande are a rare and unusual event and they cannot serve any useful purpose. Agree or disagree and provide your data and reasoning.
4. Witchcraft explains events more completely than science does. Agree or disagree and provide your data and reasoning.

True/False

5. According to Evans-Pritchard the Azande see witchcraft beliefs as a means to understand the relationship between humans and unfortunate events
6. Witchcraft is ubiquitous among the Azande.
7. All unfortunate events that occur to the Azande are blamed on witchcraft.
8. The Azande are terrified of witchcraft.
9. All illness, injury and disease are attributed to witchcraft among the Azande
10. Evans-Pritchard states that it is clear that the Azande do not attribute mystical causation to all phenomena. When do they attribute an event to witchcraft or mystical causation?
11. Witchcraft is said to explain “the synchronicity of events.” Give an example of this from the article.
12. Zande philosophy is said to provide the missing link in the chain of causation for unfortunate events. Give an example of this from the article.
13. What do you use to explain the missing link in regards to unfortunate events?

Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande

1. Who is concerned with divination? State at least two ways in which humans engage in divination.
2. What would a functionalist say in regards to the rules about who can use the poison oracle? (To answer this you need to be clear as to who can use the oracle and how it is used)
3. The use of the poison oracle among the Azande is clearly- rational or irrational?

Strange Beliefs- Video Questions

Name _____

1. This video is a part of a series entitled "Strangers Abroad." In your opinion does this video exoticize the Azande? Does it work to make their beliefs and practices seem strange and unusual? Does this video make the Azande into the *Other*?
2. Evans Pritchard states that he accepted the Azande beliefs in their culture but he did not accept them in his culture. Does this make sense to you? Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? A situation in which you accepted the ways of another family or culture while you were visiting or living there but let go of those beliefs or practices once you left?
3. Mary Douglas notes that in the early years of anthropological study they were asking questions such as "Were they different from us, intellectually or emotionally? Why did they have different beliefs?" What were the answers that Douglas, and Evans-Pritchard came up with?
4. To what degree do you think colonization impacted the questions that anthropologists were asking? Colonization involved the taking over of other peoples land, and the people themselves. Anthropologists often conducted participant-observation in the colonies of their homeland. To what degree does the military, economic, political and social power of your nation affect the way in which you look at and perceive other peoples?
5. What specifically did Evans-Pritchard have to do to engage in participant-observation of the Azande?
6. When Evans-Pritchard conducted his research there was a great deal of discussion as to the mentality of traditional peoples (the term primitive was generally used to describe them). What were some of the specific reasons that the Azande and others were thought to be intellectually inferior?
7. What is Evans-Pritchard's perspective as to the similarities and differences between the thought processes that he has and the thought processes of the Azande?
8. How would you define rational thinking?
9. What theoretical orientation does Evans-Pritchard adhere to?

European Witchcraft Persecutions- Matching Sheet Name _____

1. To understand the witchcraft persecutions that took place in Europe what key aspects would you include as a part of a holistic perspective?

2. Match each of the statements/positions below with one of the individuals listed below. You can have more than one individual with each statement and each individual may have more than one statement that matches their views:

- a. Individuals persecuted as witches in Europe were pagans who were practicing their pre-Christian belief system.
- b. Individuals who used hallucinogenic substances and experienced visions of flying were responsible for the idea that witches can fly.
- c. There were no witches in medieval Europe. The church and state threatened by heretical groups, set up a well-designed system to keep the general population fearful and suspicious of each other.
- d. The witchcraft persecutions cannot be explained by any one cause, the persecutions are a classic example of multiple causes and instigators being responsible over time and space.
- e. In medieval Europe there were groups of individuals who allied themselves with the devil as a part of a deliberate effort to overthrow the powers of the day.
- f. Women healers and midwives were persecuted as witches as a part of an effort to disenfranchise women as healers and to promote a male dominated medical profession.
- g. Women were the primary target of witchcraft accusations because in general women are more susceptible to the allure of the devil and being a witch.
- h. Witches were actually bad neighbors, people who were stingy, jealous, and unsociable.
- i. Witches are a figment of our imagination, the result of the nature of the human psyche and human societies.
- j. The witchcraze came about because of a variety of changes that took place in the church and in society including; different ideas about the power of the devil and the activities of the devil within human societies, the overthrow of the canon Episcopate, and the threats to the church by heretical groups.
- k. The church and the state set up well-designed system in which witchcraft beliefs were used to pit neighbor against neighbor. The result was that individuals looked to the church and state as their saviors and looked at their neighbors with suspicion.
- l. There was a medieval witchcraze in Europe in which hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women, were persecuted and killed
- m. Fewer than 50,000 people were persecuted and killed as witches in Europe over a period of 300 hundred years. During a time when capital punishment was meted out in high numbers.

Marvin Harris, Margaret Murray, H.R. Trevor-Roper, Ehrenreich & English, Robin Briggs, Norman Cohen, Kramer & Sprenger (Malleus Malificarum), Mircea Eliade, Michael Harner

3. State what you think really happened in medieval Europe and give your reasoning.

Witches and Neighbors- Robin Briggs- Worksheet **Name**_____

1. Briggs states that witches represent the opposite of all positive values. What values do they represent?

2. What are the societies that are exceptions to the beliefs in witches and why does Briggs state they are the exceptions?

3. Briggs states that witchcraft can be explained in social, cultural and psychological terms. In what way can witchcraft beliefs and accusations be linked with a social system? Specifically what are the key aspects of a society that typically has witchcraft beliefs?

4. Briggs links witchcraft with cultural values and norms. He states that witchcraft beliefs are _____ constructed in that witchcraft beliefs rest on specific views about the _____ and the way in which it _____.

True/False statements

5. In American mainstream society witches are inextricably linked with the devil (as their external source of power).
6. Per Briggs, the psychological context must be considered when examining witchcraft beliefs.
7. Briggs states that it is abnormal for humans to be suspicious of their neighbors.
8. Briggs states that when a societies is deprived of witches as a group to demonize they will often need to select alternative groups to demonize.
9. Briggs believes that there were witches in Europe and they were persecuted for their beliefs.
10. Briggs states that historical witchcraft is a delusion.
11. Briggs advocates that we follow the clerics who lumped together different kinds of behavior (occult, traditional healing, etc.) under the heading of diabolical witchcraft.
12. European witchcraft accusations is called diabolical witchcraft because the witches were said to have made a pact with the devil.
13. Overall Briggs is very positive of the historical scholarship that has documented the European witchcraft persecutions and trials. He thinks they paint an accurate and holistic picture as to what happened.
14. Linguistically Briggs sees the term witch as useful and clear in its perception and definition.
15. Briggs states that since witches did not do most of the things they were accused of we must use a holistic perspective and look at the context within which the accusations took place.
16. Briggs describes himself as literally looking like a hermit crab out of its shell.
17. Briggs data comes from primary sources such as the trial records and secondary sources such as the scholarly works of others.
18. Briggs states that all historians are always careful to not impose a false homogeneity on the past.

Wicca Worksheet

Name _____

(Questions from: The Goat and the Gazelle: Witchcraft)

True/False

1. In the above article the author states that modern day Wicca can be traced to Gerald Gardner's writings in the 1940's.
2. It is clear that humans, in general, find magical thinking very compelling.
3. Magic, is found by some to give them a worldview that aids them in negotiating life. For others, magic is irrational and unacceptable.
4. The use of a baby in the witches circle (for focus in a healing ritual) clearly shows a history of infanticide and cannibalism among witch groups.
5. Gerald Gardner read Margaret Murray's book claiming that witches have existed since pre-Christian times. He then wrote fictitious ethnographies about witches who worship an earth Goddess and her consort beneath the full moon.
6. Gardner claimed that witches faith and rituals allowed them to be a happy, content group.
7. Invented traditions are interesting, according to the author, because they put such weight on history as a means to validate a belief system or practice.
8. All witches believe that Wicca has been practiced since Paleolithic times (30,000 years ago) and goddess figurines are proof of this.
9. Witchcraft is meant to be a revival of ancient nature religions.
10. A key aspect of witchcraft is to connect with the technology of the modern age.
11. Experientially witchcraft can involve the experience of having the line between you and a lizard or tree melt away and you are one with nature.
12. The Wiccan worldview, has as a constant theme, the cyclic nature of life and death. Life and death are stages of life, with one flowing into the other and around again.
13. It is the influence of Judeo-Christian beliefs that leads many Wiccans to personify their Goddess as an actual deity that cares about them.
14. The rituals of Wicca center around cycles of nature, the solstices, the equinoxes, and the cycles of the moon.
15. There are no absolutes in Wiccan ritual but an alter is common with candles representing the four directions, and the four elements.
16. All Wicca groups use the Book of Shadows as their bible.
17. What could be a function of worshipping a Goddess for a feminist?
18. If you had to explain Wicca to someone who knew nothing about it, other than the prevalent stereotypes what would you say about; the beliefs, the rituals, the history, the various sects, and the stereotypes of Wicca?

Dia de los Muertos – Worksheet

Name _____

(Questions from Digging the Days of the Dead)

1. In a sentence describe Dia de los Muertos to someone who knows nothing about it.

True/False Statements

2. The dead are not regarded as separate from the living. They belong to the same, unbroken family. They are not excluded from recollections, or prayers because they are no longer visible.
3. In all communities where Dia de los Muertos is celebrated it is thought that if you don't put out a good ofrenda you will suffer misfortune in the coming year.
4. Clearly a function of Dia de los Muertos is for people to do something for the dead so the dead will offer them protection and good luck in the year to come.
5. Dia de los Muertos is often experienced as a celebration of national identity for Mexicans.
6. More than anything Dia de los Muertos is a holiday in which the dead are remembered.
7. A function of Dia de los Muertos is to give comfort, to know the dead are still alive, to alleviate the fear of death.
8. In rural areas the holiday is often focused on the harvest and giving gratitude for the death of crops which give life to humans.
9. La Ofrenda (the alter) is an integral part of Dia de los Muertos
10. On the alters families put pictures, food, water, salt, sugar, incense and many other items.
11. Sugar represents the bitter life. Salt represents the sweet in life.
12. If you died without family or friends or far from home, you will never be remembered in an alter
13. Dia de los Muertos always focuses on the alter. The gravesite is never a focus on this day.
14. Everyone who experiences Dia de los Muertos states that they have felt the presence of the dead and have noticed the lack of taste in the food left behind (after being kissed by the dead).
15. If you were asked to describe the beliefs and rituals of Dia de los Muertos to someone who knew nothing about it what would you say?

Dia de los Muertos- Video Questions

Name _____

1. What cultural values and norms play out in the belief that “The way you lived determines what happens when you die” (i.e. where you go after death, heaven, hell, nirvana, etc.)?
2. What cultural values and norms would play out in the belief that “The way you died determines what happens when you die” (i.e. where you go after death, heaven, hell, nirvana, etc.)?
3. The practices and beliefs that play out in Dia de los Muertos celebrations reflect a syncretism between Catholicism and Indigenous beliefs (Aztec, Maya, etc.) in Mexico. How did this blending occur? What was the context and circumstances in which it occurred?
4. What is a calavera? What role do calavera’s play in Dia de los Muertos (reflect on what a symbol is and the role that symbols play in human lives). Are you comfortable with this symbol? Why or why not? Would you feel comfortable eating a sugar calavera with your name on it?
5. What are the differences between attitudes towards death in mainstream America and in mainstream Mexico in regards to death? (i.e. language, symbols, rites and rituals)
6. What material conditions (yes, this is a question that Marvin Harris would ask!) do you think affect a cultures beliefs, rites, and rituals in regards to death?
7. A civilization that denies death ends up denying life. Agree or disagree with the statement. Reflect on the consequences in daily life when a culture embraces death and when it works to deny death. (think of medical practices, religious practices, social practices, language used)

8. Are life and death part of a continuous cycle or are they discrete, separate, opposite events? How do these two different views affect your worldview?
9. What is Halloween? What beliefs surround this holiday? What practices do people engage in? What are the symbols used for Halloween? Where did Halloween come from?
10. What are the key differences between Halloween and Dia de los Muertos? Compare and contrast in regards to; symbols, beliefs, practices.
11. What factors are leading to the increasing celebration of Halloween in areas of Mexico? What factors are leading to the increasing celebration of Dia de los Muertos in the United States? Are these changes good or negative
12. Octavio Paz states that to “the Christians death is a transition...between the temporal (earthly) and the otherworldly” and to the Aztecs death was the “profoundest way of participating in the continuous regeneration of the creative forces...which always must be...provided with blood and the sacred food.” What is the key difference between these two ways of looking at and experiencing death?
13. Octavio Paz states that in our culture, the philosophy of progress governs our lives and society we live in works to pretend that death doesn't exist, that it is suppressed everywhere. Do you agree or disagree with him? What are the ramifications of our value for progress (and what is progress)?

Dia de los Muertos- Day of the Dead Altar & Paper

Your Alter: For this assignment you will be making your own altar and writing a paper about your experience of making an altar. Over the years I have found that it is common for students to initially feel uncomfortable about this assignment, but I have yet to find a student who did not ultimately find this project a positive experience. Feel free to speak to me about any concerns that you have in regards to this assignment.

Selection of Altar focus/topic: Often the hardest part of this assignment is the selection of whom or what you want to honor. The focus of the altar is your choice. You may honor a family member or friend who has died, or you may honor a public figure or even honor the death of an idea or timeframe. In the past students have selected a wide array of choices for their altar, from very personal selections (honoring the death of a loved family member or friend or a beloved pet) to public figures (Kurt Cobain, Marilyn Monroe are two examples), to the death of an idea, movement or time frame (the death of innocence, free political thought, etc.). One thing to keep in mind is that you will be sharing your altar with the class. If you have suffered a recent loss you might want to reconsider how it will affect you to present this in class. I have had students honor a close friend or family member and become very emotional, which can be difficult if they become overwhelmed.

Materials to use for the Altar: I suggest that you use poster board or a shoe box. You will be bringing the altar to class and then taking it home the same day. Before you start your altar make sure to read the chapter from Digging the Days of the Dead. We will also be viewing a video in class on Dia de los Muertos which should aid you in coming up with ideas. If you google Day of the Dead and you'll find a wealth of pictures and data on this practice. Make sure that you read through the list of key items that all altars are supposed to have (in your chapter from Digging Days of the Dead and in these notes). You don't have to include all of the items mentioned but I do expect you to include key symbols and pictures that would be appropriate.

Your Altar presentation- On the day that the altars are due we will have a viewing in which students will review each others altars in regards to the following; 1) Is it clear who or what the altar is honoring? Were pictures, symbols, and/or words used to display the focus of the altar?, 2) Were the appropriate symbols, and items used to welcome the return of the spirits? 3) Did the altar convey the emotions of loss and the welcoming of the spirits? Was the altar meaningful? Poignant?

Day of the Dead Paper: Your paper is both an explanation and a reaction to your altar assignment. Your paper should be two pages long, typed, and contain your name and the title of the assignment.

Part One of your paper should be an overview of your altar, the symbols you've included, the meanings associated with what you included, and your thought process as to why you included some items and not others. To receive full credit for this paper make sure that you reference information from class readings, lecture and video as you describe what symbols and information you included.

Part Two of your paper should include your reactions to this assignment; what was your initial reaction, how did the project develop over time, how do you view this assignment once you've finished with your altar (was it a positive, negative, difficult, fun, sad, interesting, etc. experience?).

Vodou Questions (from Karen McCarthy Brown's article)

Name _____

1. Give at least two reasons as to why Vodou is such a misunderstood and maligned religion.
2. What percentage of the Haitian population serve the spirits?
3. Vodou is said to be a syncretic religion. What two religions influenced the formation of Vodou?
4. When did Haiti earn its independence from the French? When did the United States earn its independence from Britain (FYI- this answer isn't in your text)?

True/False Questions

5. Vodou is always practiced in a group lead by a priest or priestess
6. Vodou ritualizing includes; lighting candles for spirits, holding feasts, and animal sacrifice.
7. Sacrifice is an uncommon ritual in most religions around the world
8. Drumming and singing are used to call the spirits and heat up a situation as a prelude to possession.
9. In possession, the possessed individual is said to be ridden by the spirit because the spirit actually appears on the individuals back and can be seen by the congregation of believers
10. During possession the spirit takes over the body of the possessed individual and interacts with the congregation of believers, offering advice and chastisement.
11. Vodou is practiced pretty much the same all over Haiti.
12. Haitian slaves were forced to farm and provide most of the sugar for Western Europe
13. We have no idea which African groups had the most influence on the formation of Vodou
14. Ogou is spirit whose focus is on the constructive and destructive uses of military power.
15. When individuals are possessed by Ogou, he will often focus on issues in human relations such as anger, self-assertion and willfulness.
16. French slaveholders clearly cared about the souls of the slaves in that they baptized them
17. Catholic theology plays a key role in Vodou as a religion
18. The Catholic saints overlap with the Vodou spirits.
19. In Vodou there is one God, Bondye, who plays a role similar as the Catholic conception of God, an all-knowing, all-powerful, patriarch.
20. Most Haitians see Vodou as a cult
21. If you want to accomplish something important and difficult you should call on a Rada spirit because they are sweet, and wise.
22. In Vodou it is believed that individual's can have two to four souls
23. If the met-tet (master of your head) is a Petro spirit it is likely that you have a powerful, hot blooded nature.
24. When a Gede spirit appears at a ritual (possessing an initiate) they will likely poke fun at someone who is uptight and full of themselves.
25. As with many religions, Vodou has sacred pilgrimages to sacred sites.
26. If you had to explain the religion of Vodou to someone who knows nothing about it, besides the common stereotypes of zombie's and vodou dolls what would you say? Make sure to address; origins of Vodou, belief system of Vodou, the spirits, possession, and Vodou rituals.

Serpent and the Rainbow (Wade Davis) Questions

1. Zora Neal Hurston was an _____ American, _____, and former student of _____.
2. Zora Neal Hurston was or was not surprised that there was a continuation of West African cultural traits in Haiti.
3. When Hurston meet Franz Boas he was in the middle of _____. At that time British social anthropology was an explicit tool of _____. Boas rejected arbitrary notions of _____ and evolutionary _____ which placed Western society at the top of the _____.
4. Franz Boas insisted that every culture possessed its own _____.
5. Boas saw anthropology as useful for two key things:

True/False Statements

6. Hurston's statement "Hoodoo doctors of the American South practice a religion every bit as strict and formal as that of the Catholic Church" was aimed at the ethnocentrism of her day.
7. Zora Neal Hurston's style as an anthropologist clearly emphasized observation and veered away from participation.
8. Hurston's style of research aided her in gaining the etic perspective. She had a lot more difficulty gaining the emic perspective because she tried to stand back and be objective.
9. A holistic perspective of Vodou would include an understanding of the military and political relations between Haiti and the USA.
10. The racism and ethnocentrism of the day is reflected in the statement "Haiti was a bit like having a little bit of Africa next door, something dark and foreboding, sensual and terribly naughty"
11. The American occupation of Haiti (from 1915-1934) has nothing to do with current, popular conceptions of Vodou.
12. The statement "any country where such abominations took place could find its salvation only through military occupation" reveals the means by which American political powers used propaganda about Vodou to get the American publics support for military invasion.
13. The US military has pretty much stayed out of Haiti since 1934 (answer not in your text)
14. Hurston was concerned that information gathered on Vodou could be exploited if placed in the wrong hands and used out of context.
15. An informer of Hurston's told her that the secret societies were detested by the majority of the people of Haiti. Hurston took this as the final word on Haitian secret societies.
16. Haitian anthropologist Laguerre disagreed with Hurston's assessment of the secret societies. He stated they were not criminal organizations.
17. Laguerre's view of Haitian secret societies is consistent with Wade Davis's view.
18. Ti Femme and Clairvius Narcisse, two individuals who claimed to be zombified, were viewed very positively in their villages before they were taken and zombified.
19. When Hurston published her book Tell My Horse it was well received in both the US and Haiti.
20. Wade Davis states that Hurston's book would likely have been received more positively in another time (than 1938 when it was written).

Vodou – In Search of History- Video Questions

Name_____

1. Where is Vodou most commonly practiced in the United States? What is the general impression of Vodou in the United States?
2. What are the two different views of Marie LeBeau? How do you think these two divergent perceptions of her came about?
3. What is the common perception in the United States as to the function of Vodou dolls? From the perspective of Vodou practitioners what is their view as to the function of Vodou dolls?
4. Explain the statement “nothing is poison, everything is poison” (use an example).
5. What is the common perception in the United States as to what a zombie is? Where did this perception come from? What is the Haitian perception as to what zombie’s are? What are the key differences in these two perceptions of zombies?
6. What is Wade Davis’s hypothesis as to the origin and use of zombies in Haiti? What type of data and reasoning does Davis use to make his case? What is your opinion?
7. What does the snake symbolize in Vodou? What does the snake symbolize in Christianity?
8. What does the cross symbolize in Vodou? What does the cross symbolize in Christianity?
9. What is a cult? How would you define a cult to differentiate it from a religion? Is Vodou a cult? Can you think of another belief system that is commonly labeled a cult?

Vodou Video Questions- page two

10. Within Vodou what is the role of the natural world? How is nature perceived and viewed within Vodou? What is the role of nature in Christianity?

11. What has been the role of Vodou in Haitian politics? Think about the origin of Haiti, when it declared its independence from France. Think about recent politics. What has been the role of Christianity in American politics? Is religion ever truly separate from politics?

12. What happens during possession? What role does possession play in Vodou? Is the practice and experience of possession unique to Vodou? Can you think of other religions in which possession is an important part of the belief system?

13. During possession what happens to the individual that is possessed?

14. The statement is made that *"you white people go to church and speak about god, but we dance in the temple and become god."* Where does the divine reside in Vodou? Where does the divine reside in Christianity?

15. What is the role of the drums in Vodou? What other material items are used in Vodou ceremonies?

16. What role does divination play in Vodou? What can believers learn through divination? What other religions utilize divination in their practices?

17. How is Vodou described as a religion by its practitioners? What is the worldview of Vodou practitioners?

Serpent Handling as Sacrament- Questions

Name _____

1. What are the different roles that Mary Daugherty (author of the article) has taken on in her life and where was she born and raised?
2. Why do you think that Daugherty's makes the comment about the serpent-handlers being unaware of the disputed nature of the passage in Mark?
3. Daugherty compares the act snake handling with the danger and harshness of the lives of those who practice snake handling. Would this analysis fit in best with; cultural materialism, functionalism, or symbolic anthropology?
4. What is considered the ultimate act of faith?
5. Daugherty states that the snake handlers took a literal passage from the bible to validate their practice. However, she sees snake handling as holding for them the significance of _____. What does this mean?
6. When a snake handler is bitten and/or dies from being bitten it is common for other members of the congregation to state it was _____. Daugherty has never heard anyone accuse the stricken individual of not having enough _____.
7. What do most of the believers lives revolve around?
8. What does the snake/serpent generally symbolize in the Christian worldview?
9. What does the snake/serpent symbolize to the snake handlers?
10. Why don't those who are bitten by the snakes get medical help?
11. Daugherty states that the serpent handlers have a deep longing for _____.
12. It is the _____ which enables the believers to pick up serpents, to speak in tongues, to cure diseases, and to drink poison.
13. Daugherty relates to the snake handlers in an objective/subjective way?

Serpent Handling as Sacrament- Questions (page two)

True/False Questions

14. The church services of the snake handlers is typical of most Christian churches. There is an authoritarian leader (priest/minister) who follows a strict script which the believers adhere to.
15. Jesus is viewed by the snake handlers in the same way that he is viewed in mainstream Christian churches. As a simple, uneducated carpenter, who fished and was done in by the power structures of his day.
16. Jesus is viewed by the females in snake handling churches as representative of the men that they interact with everyday, their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons.
17. Most of the snake handlers are literalists in regards to the bible and the bible is read avidly at each church service.
18. Daugherty is struck by the rigid, controlled way in which church services are performed and by the strict, rigid way in which the members of the church interact with each other.
19. Daugherty compares the love she witnesses in the church services as like a glimmer of what the Kingdom of Heaven must be like.
20. Holiness church members have a very strict personal code of morality. Gender roles are rigidly viewed and enforced.
21. Church services usually begin with singing and snakes are always handled at some point.
22. Daugherty puts forth the following hypothesis- "the ritual of snake handling is their way of celebrating life, death, and resurrection...time and again they prove to themselves that Jesus has the power to deliver them from death here and now"

Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia

1. What is the role of Dennis Covington in this video/story of snake handlers?
2. State two similarities and two differences between Dennis Covington and Mary Daugherty.
3. What causes Covington to have a bit of culture shock?
4. What is the context within which Covington states snake handling began?

Serpent Handling Assignment: You are a part of an anthropology team studying the Pentecostal serpent handlers. You need to determine the role of each member of your team. How will you collect your data? Come up with at least 2-4 questions for each member of your team to ask. Each member of your team should adopt a particular theories and/or methodology to guide their research. What barriers do you expect to encounter (collecting data, being objective, writing your ethnography using both emic and etic perspectives)? How will you overcome these barriers? Lastly work to answer these questions: 1) Are they a cult? 2) Will they continue to operate in the USA? 3) Why do you think Pentecostalism is becoming so popular with Haitians?

Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

**Articles
Fall 2009**

Articles

Body Ritual Among the Nacirema by Horace Miner

Rational Mastery by Man of His Surroundings by Bronislaw Malinowski

Baseball Magic by George Gmelch

Shamans and Shamanism

Shamanism (excerpt from book) by Piers Vitebsky

Shamans Through Time Edited by Jeremy Narby & Francis Huxley (articles below are from the book)

Ministers of the Devil Who Learn About the Secrets of Nature by Andre Thevet

Shamans Deserve Perpetual Labor for Their Hocus Pocus by Johann Georg Gimelin

Seeking Contact with Spirits is Not Necessarily Shamanism by Franz Boas

Seeking Knowledge in the Solitude of Nature by Igjugarjuk & Knud Rasmussen

!Kung Medicine Dance by Lorna Marshall

I Found Myself Impaled on the Axis Mundi by Barbara Myerhoff

Plant Teachers by Luis Eduardo Luna

Shamans and Scientists by Jeremy Narby

Witchcraft: Traditional Witchcraft, European Persecutions, Wicca and Paganism

Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events by E. Evans-Pritchard

Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande by E. Evans-Pritchard

Witches and Neighbors: Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft by Robin Briggs

The Goat and the Gazelle by Tanya Luhrmann

Paganism- from the Pagan Educational Network

Dia De Los Muertos- Death, Beliefs and Ritual

Digging the Days of the Dead (Chapter from the book) by Juanita GarciaGodoy

Vodou

Voodoo by Karen McCarthy Brown

Tell My Horse chapter in The Serpent and the Rainbow by Wade Davis

The Supernatural and Religion in the context of Society

Serpent-Handling as Sacrament by Mary Lee Daugherty

Cargo Cults by Peter M. Worsley

